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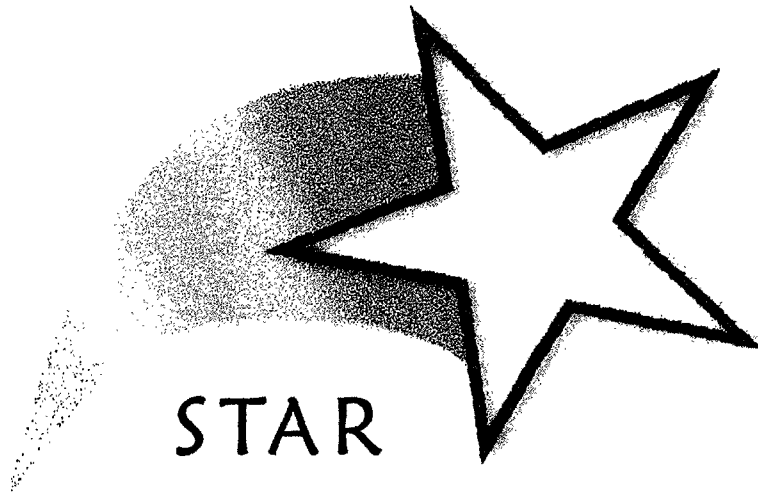
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STAR

Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness

TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

Participant Version

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- Academy for Professional Excellence Staff
- Numerous individuals who took part in STAR focus groups, interviews, and training sessions

The dedication of the aforementioned individuals enabled us to accomplish our goal: to impact practice and policy in child welfare, leading ultimately to improved outcomes for youth exiting foster care.

HISTORY

In the year 2000, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) and the Children's Bureau, funded 12, three-year projects for the training of child welfare practitioners to work effectively with youth transitioning out of foster care through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). The Academy for Professional Excellence, a project of the San Diego State University (SDSU) School of Social Work and the SDSU Foundation was one of the 12 recipients of this three-year grant.

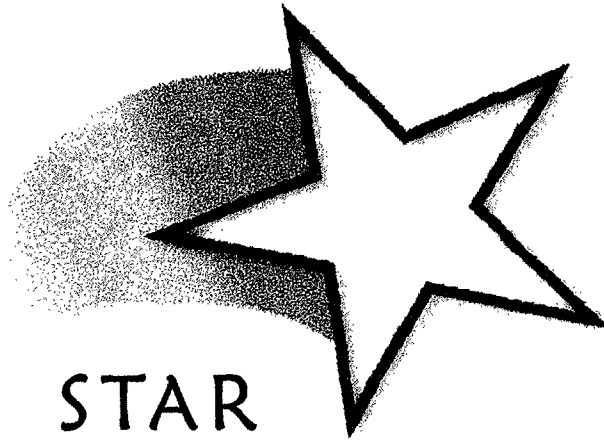
The STAR Project was designed to develop and implement a training program to impact practice and policy in public child welfare, leading ultimately to better outcomes for youth exiting foster care. This was accomplished via a public-private partnership between the Southern California Academy for Professional Excellence and Casey Family Programs. Four other organizations also joined this partnership: San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, Grossmont College Foster and Kinship Care Education, the Children's Initiative, and Southern Indian Health Council.

The project accomplished this goal via the development and implementation of three curricula:

1. Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR)
2. STAR Training for Managers and Supervisors
3. A Train-the-Trainer version of the above curricula

The purpose of the STAR Training for Managers and Supervisors is to train managers and supervisors of child welfare professionals, foster / kinship parents, group home staff, employment services personnel, educators, probation officers, Indian service staff, independent living contract providers and others who work with adolescent foster youth. The goal of the training is to impact practice and policy in child welfare, leading ultimately to improved outcomes for youth leaving foster care. This is an interdisciplinary training, written to be delivered in one day, lasting 6 hours. The Training for Managers and Supervisors addresses issues related to larger policy considerations and on-going supervision (i.e. integration of independent living work with all other aspects of the social work job). The training session covers the following topics: raising and protecting youth, the youth development philosophy, realities of foster care, community realities and collaboration, community strategic planning.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
INTRODUCTION



Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness

TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

INTRODUCTION

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
INTRODUCTION

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	★ Objectives	7	
	★ Competencies Addressed	8	
9:30– 9:40	I. STAR Training Background	9	
	★ Benefits	10	
	★ Themes and Values	11	
	★ Structure of the Training Curriculum	12	
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SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the training, the participant will be able to:

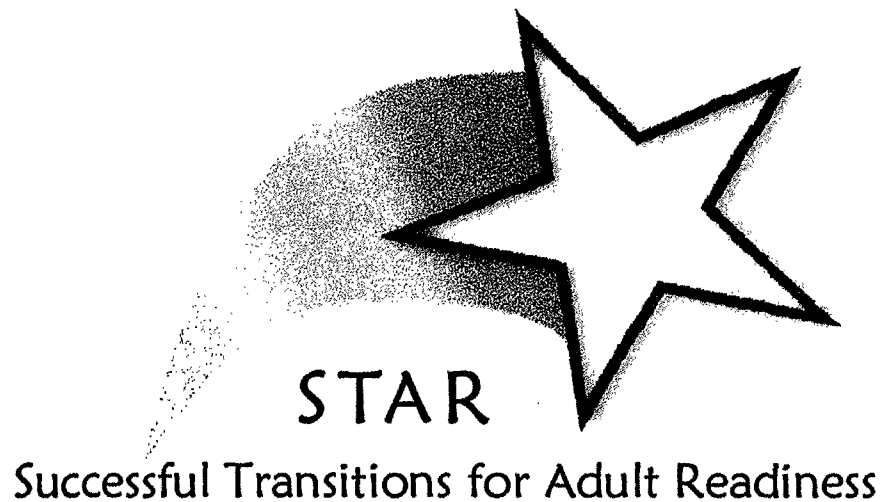
1. Identify the goals and objectives of the STAR training.
2. Understand the STAR macro, mezzo, and micro systems and the importance of a strong interdependent relationship.
3. Identify local/ national statistics regarding the status of youth who have transitioned from the foster care system.
4. Gain an awareness of federal and state legislation, policies and standards pertaining to Independent Living programming.
5. Identify characteristics of a system of care that will support youth to successful transition to adulthood.
6. Describe the importance of collaborative interdisciplinary teams to the success of youth transitioning from the foster care system to adult living.
7. Identify and collaborate with community agencies to plan and develop strategies that serve the needs of transitioning youth.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of diverse professional roles and cultural differences as well as key communication skills in interdisciplinary settings.
9. Discuss the emerging philosophy of "raising and protecting" children in the child welfare system compared to only "protecting youth".
10. Acknowledge the value of the Youth development philosophy and gather various strategies for how to integrate this into your work with youth.
11. Elicit a call-to-action from appropriate community leaders to acknowledge their role in enhancing outcomes for transitioning foster youth.
12. Return to respective community with a formulated plan and strategies to support a foster youth's transition to adulthood.

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COMPETENCIES

1. Student understands the policies and legal issues that impact youth development and knows how to effectively work within them to enhance self-sufficiency. (STAR)
2. Student values the importance of adopting a strengths-based perspective in working with youth, inspiring youth to achieve their potential. (STAR)
3. Student has knowledge of the resources in the community that provide services appropriate to youth transitioning out of foster care. (IHS 222-27)
4. Student actively collaborates with other community agencies, professionals, and the youth themselves in developing case plans; and is an effective member of multidisciplinary conferences. (CalSWEC 5.3)
5. Student knows the importance of joint planning and of consistency in approach and expectations by all adults teaching independent living skills to youth. (IHS 222-2)
6. Student has knowledge of and values the Youth Development Philosophy as a core principle in the successful emancipation of youth from foster care. (CalSWEC 4.2)
7. Student values the importance of both supporting and preparing youth to develop the life skills to enable them to be self-sufficient in adulthood. (CalSWEC 4.2)

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION I: STAR TRAINING BACKGROUND



TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

SECTION I

STAR TRAINING
BACKGROUND

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION I: STAR TRAINING BACKGROUND

BENEFITS

1. As a result of STAR Training, it is anticipated that benefits will be realized in three important areas:
 - a) **Direct Impact on Youth.** As a result of child welfare professional's increased competence in this area, there will be an increase in the number of youth emancipating from foster care who have a continuing relationship with a supportive adult, who have a safe and stable place to live, and who are employed or in educational programs contributing to the development of marketable skills.
 - b) **Impact on Professional Skills.** This training is designed to improve professional competency in identifying youth strengths and needs in independent living skills, as well as addressing the needs of older foster youth populations.
 - a) **Impact on Organizational Practice.** This training should result in improved collaboration with partners in the identification and provision of services to both foster and former foster youth.

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THEMES AND VALUES

1. Preparing youth for a successful transition to adulthood begins at the moment he/she enters foster care.
2. Collaboration among all care providers is a crucial factor to successful youth emancipation.
3. Building self-esteem contributes to the youth's successful functioning as an adult.
4. Having at least one stable person to relate to throughout the foster care experience assists with successful transitioning to adult life.
5. The workers' cultural competence greatly enhances cultural identity and self esteem on the part of the foster youth.
6. Youth need support in learning how to access and utilize educational opportunities (including college, vocational school and other training opportunities).
7. Youth need support in the development of skills necessary for successful employment.
8. For successful transitioning of youth from the foster care system, it is important that care providers:
 - a) Commit to being aware of and assist youth in developing skills needed for successful adult living.
 - b) Understand and support the practice shift from "protecting" youth to "raising and protecting" youth.
 - c) Encourage youth to develop a sense of internal empowerment.

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STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING CURRICULUM

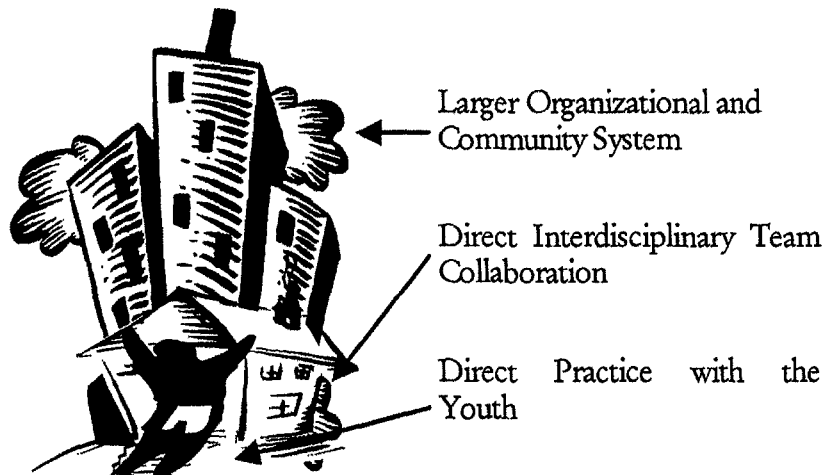
"No man is an island unto himself."

John Locke

The training philosophy emphasizes:

1. An understanding that the adolescent does not exist alone but in the context of their environment, including family and community.
2. The use of three levels of care will aid in providing effective care for youth:
 - a) **Macro** - Larger organizational and community systems that impact policy and practice of care providers working with youth.
 - b) **Mezzo** Issues related to the interdisciplinary team collaboration with the youth on their case plan, as well as the personal development of adolescents making the transition to adulthood and independence.
 - c) **Micro** Direct practice in working with youth, including the different roles one may play as a care provider and the implementation of *STAR practice*.

Building STAR Outcomes
for Foster Youth



TRAINING TERMINOLOGY

The following is an explanation of the key words and symbols used throughout the training curriculum.

CARE PROVIDER

The term “care provider” is used throughout the STAR Training. For the purposes of the STAR Training, this term will be used to define the interdisciplinary trainee group: child welfare professionals, group home staff, foster/kinship parents, educators, probation officers, contract staff and others involved in preparing adolescents in foster care for adulthood. It is recognized that the aforementioned groups provide “care” for the youth, and thus, the term “care provider” is recognized as an appropriate term with which to define this group.

COMPETENCIES

Competencies are listed for the training. The competencies come from one of three sources, including the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), the Institute for Human Services (IHS), or the Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR) Project.

CalSWEC, or The California Child Welfare Competencies were created for use by California graduate schools of social work to prepare their child welfare students for work in the field of social work.

IHS competencies were developed as part of a competency-based training system by the Institute for Human Services. They were developed to reflect the individual worker’s job-related training needs.

STAR competencies were developed as part of the STAR Project. These competencies reflect the priorities of ensuring *STAR practice* standards when working with adolescents preparing to leave foster care.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

It is critical to identify ways to integrate the concepts presented in the STAR Training into day-to-day interactions with the youth. The “Implications for Practice” section within each session will be used as a springboard for

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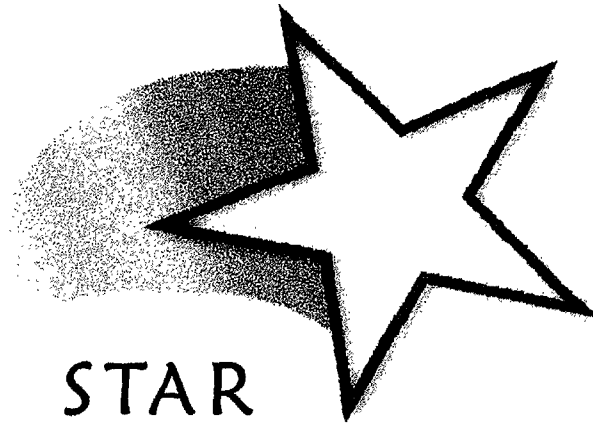
application of the concepts. The ideas presented do not represent an all-inclusive list, but rather a sampling of ideas. Please use the area following the presented "Implications for Practice" to create some of your own practice ideas.

STAR PRACTICE

Devised from practice strategies indicated to be effective via evidence-based research and/or human service expertise. These practices move beyond a minimum level of standards for service delivery, to create a high level of effective service delivery, thus influencing positive youth outcomes.

R This symbol indicates that there is a **RESOURCE** at the back of the binder that provides further information related to the topic at hand. There is no need to review the resource, just remember that it is there, and that it is something you may want to read later.

H This symbol indicates that there is a **HANDOUT** at the back of the binder that is to be used at the current time. Please take the handout out of the binder so that it will be easier to utilize.



STAR

Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness

TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

SECTION II

REALITIES OF FOSTER CARE

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION II: REALITIES OF FOSTER CARE

CHAFEE IN DETAIL

Provision	Description
Amount	\$140 million capped entitlement
State Match	20% required on total allocation
Allocation Formula	Based on the proportion of children in both Title IV-E funded and state funded foster care in the state for the most recent fiscal year, no state shall receive less than \$500,000 or it's 1998 allotment, whichever is greater.
Set-aside for data collection	1.5% of authorized program funds set aside for evaluation, technical assistance, performance measurement, and data collection.
Eligible young people	Young people up to age 21 who are "likely to remain in foster care until age 18" and those who have aged out of foster care, without regard to their eligibility for Title IV-E funded foster care.
Benefits to Indian Children	States must make benefits and services available to Indian children in the state on the same basis as other children.
Participating in program design	Young people must participate directly in designing their own program activities and accept personal responsibility for achieving independence.
Funding for services to older youth	States must use a portion of their funds for assistance and services for young people 18 to 21 who left foster care because they reached age 18.
Use of funds for room and board	States may use up to 30% of their program funds for room and board for young people 18 to 21 who have left foster care because they reached age 18.
Health care	States given the option to extend medical coverage to young people ages 18 to 21 that have left foster care on their 18 th birthday, or some subset of this group.
Asset Limit	Asset limit changed from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and remain eligible for Title IV-E funded foster care.
Training for staff and Parents	States must certify that Title IV-E funds will be used to provide training to help adoptive and foster parents, workers in group homes and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living.

(Bay Area Social Services Consortium, 2001, p. 13)

R See **RESOURCE 1** for a copy of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.

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SECTION II: REALITIES OF FOSTER CARE

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

- ☆ 1985 -- The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 96-272) added Section 477 to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act authorizing funds to states to design and implement programs to assist foster care children to make the transition to adulthood.
- ☆ 1986 -- The Independent Living Program (ILP) was initially authorized by Public Law (P.L.) 99-272 with the Transitional Living Program for Older Foster Children with the goal of assisting youth who are or were in foster care to become independent adults.
- ☆ 1993 -- The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66) permanently re-authorized the ILP effective October 1, 1992. ILP across the nation can be categorized in two components: skill training (daily living, employment skills, and education) and transitional support services (room and board along with counseling).
- ☆ 1999 -- Limitations of funding and public policy were not addressed until the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (H.R. 3443). The act was signed into law (P.L. 106-169) on December 14, 1999 and established the John R. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (referred to as the Chafee Independence Program, details on following page).

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HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

ACTIVITY: IL Match Game (25 minutes)

Objective: To gain an awareness of legislation and policy related to independent living programs, and statistics related to foster youth who have emancipated.

Answer Key

Column A (red)	Column B (blue)
1986 The Independent Living Program (ILP)	Authorized by PL 99272 to assist youth who are or were in foster care to become independent adults
The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66)	Created two components of ILP – skill training and transitional support services
1999 Foster Care Independence Act	Addressed the limitations of funding and public policy. Established the John R. Chafee Foster Care Program
In the U.S. 25,000 youth/year	Age out of the foster care dependency system.
In California nearly 4,355 youth/year	Leave the foster care system
46% of former foster youth	Do not complete high school
51% of former foster youth	Are unemployed
25% of former foster youth	Are homeless
40% of former foster youth	Received public assistance
In 2001-02 23,361 youths in California	Were served by ILP
Less than 10% of foster youth	Were enrolled in college (2 & 4 yr. Institutions) after high school)
More than 60% of non-foster youth in Calif. and 50% of non-foster youth in the US	Were enrolled in college (2 & 4 yr. Institutions) after high school (average 1996)
About 20% of foster youth	Obtain employment at age 18

"There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come."

Victor Hugo

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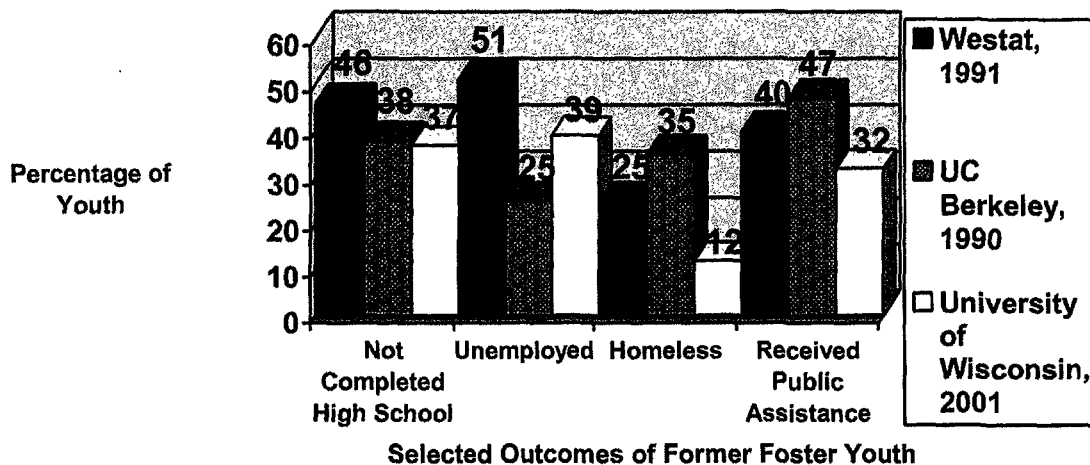
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION

- ☆ California has been actively involved with the ILP since 1987 when the California Department of Social Services applied and received federal ILP funds and contracted with the California Community College Foundation to train foster parents and group home staff to teach independent living skills.
- ☆ The 1999-2000 and 2001-02 legislative sessions produced over 100 bills addressing child welfare issues that became law.
- ☆ AB 1111, Chapter 147, Statutes of 1999 – directed the State Department of Social Services to develop statewide standards for the implementation and administration of the Independent Living Program established by 1985 federal law.

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NATIONAL REALITIES

Every year in the United States, nearly 25,000 youth age out of the foster care dependency system. In California alone, nearly 4,355 youth leave the foster care system to face adulthood each year (United States General Accounting Office, 1999). The following statistics provide evidence that careful, intentional work is required to ensure that youth make this transition effectively.



Westat (1991) – Study of 810 former foster youth in eight states at 2.5 to 4 years after leaving care.

UC Berkeley (Barth, 1990) – Study of 55 former foster care youth in the San Francisco Bay Area at least 1 year, and no more than 10 years after leaving care.

University of Wisconsin (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor & Nesmith 2001)– study of 113 former foster youth in Wisconsin at 12 to 18 months after leaving care.

R See **RESOURCE 2** for a summary of CA's Independent Living Program 2001-2002 Annual Statistical Report. County information is available at www.dss.ca.gov.

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SECTION II: REALITIES OF FOSTER CARE

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL FINDINGS

Past and present studies and statistics continue to reveal that:

- ☆ Young adults leaving the foster care system struggle to survive and do not do as well as “non-foster care” youth;
- ☆ Young adults leaving the foster care system lack experience in employment and educational skills;
- ☆ Young adults are leaving the foster care system without adequate practical experiences and are at risk for homelessness, incarceration, and public assistance.

“Tell me and I may forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I’ll understand”.

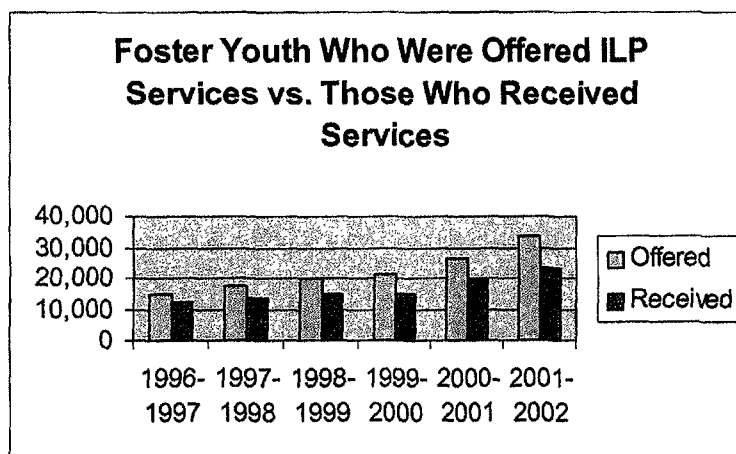
Chinese Proverb

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CALIFORNIA'S REALITIES

"If you bungle raising children, I don't think whatever else you do matters very much".

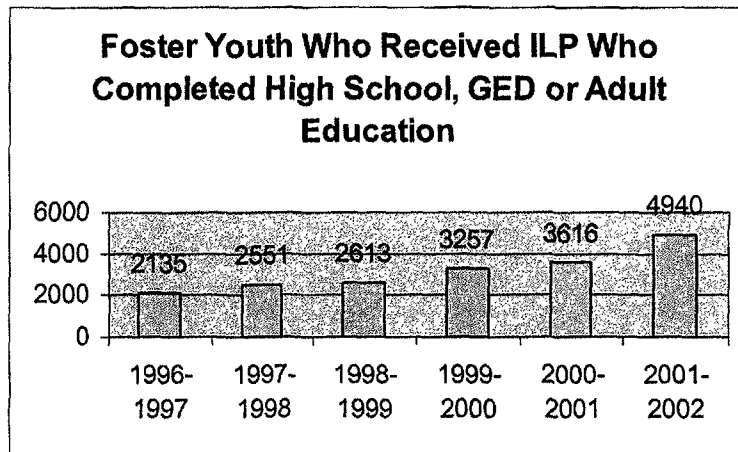
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis



(Reference: Soc 405A ILP Annual Statistical Report)

Reference: Soc 405A ILP Annual Statistical Report, http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo.htm; 2002, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/demographics/reports/statewide/ethgrate.htm>, 2001)

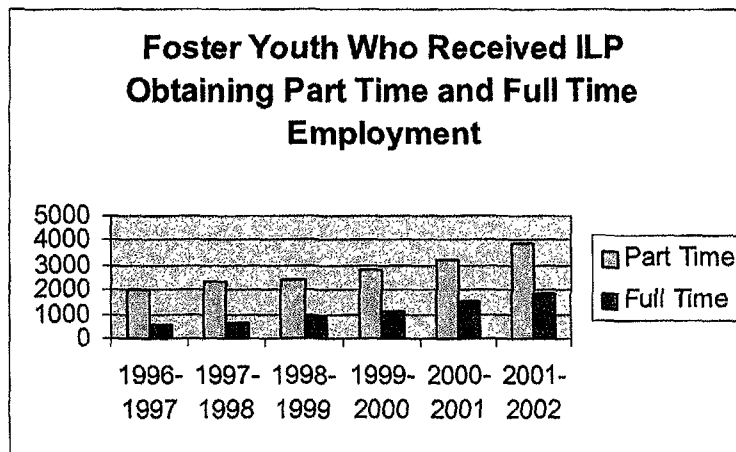
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- ☆ While the number of foster youth who have completed High School, earned their GED, or completed Adult Education is increasing, so is the number of foster youth receiving ILP services.

(Reference: Soc 405A ILP Annual Statistical Report,
[HTTP://CPEC.CA.GOV/HIGHEREDUPDATES/UPDATE/UP99-1.ASP](http://CPEC.CA.GOV/HIGHEREDUPDATES/UPDATE/UP99-1.ASP))

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(Reference: Soc 405A ILP Annual Statistical Report)

- ☆ While the number of foster youth obtaining employment is increasing, so is the number of foster youth receiving ILP services.

R See RESOURCE 2 for a copy of "California's 2001-2002 SOC405A ILP Annual Statistical Report."

*"In life, as in football, you won't go far unless you know where the goalposts are."
Arnold Glasgow*

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STANDARDS

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Independent Living Program (ILP) Strategic Planning Group, comprised of representatives as stated in AB 1111, have developed Statewide Standards for California's IL Program. During that process the ILP Strategic Planning Group discovered outcomes indicating that foster youth who have participated in ILP have fared better in the adult world than those foster youth who did not. The IL Program exposed areas that are beneficial to youth as well as those in need of improvement. Following is a compilation of challenges discovered by the ILP Strategic Planning Group combined with those from a report by the Bay Area Social Services Consortium (2001).

CHALLENGES

1. State-Level Challenges

- a) Need for a coordinated state-wide support system
- b) Enhanced database system
- c) Need for further research

2. County-Level Challenges

- a) Lack of a steady youth referral process
- b) Tracking youth
- c) Staff turnover
- d) Youth retention in IL programs
- e) Coordination of efforts between all providers
- f) Addressing youth need for housing
- g) Addressing special needs of youth

3. Provider-Level Challenges

- a) Do not always support IL programs
- b) Need for providers to offer self-sufficiency education in the home

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4. Youth-Level Challenges

- a) Unaware IL programs exist
- b) Think IL program is not appropriate for them
- c) Resistant to program
- d) Denied access for disciplinary reasons
- e) Want more practical learning

R

See **RESOURCE 3** for a copy of "Title 22 Licensing Regulations that can Pose Barriers to Emancipation for Foster Youth."

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CWS STAKEHOLDER'S GROUP

Unintentionally, past laws implied that it was important for youth to become *independent* from the Child Welfare System. For more than a decade, this emphasis on independent living, unfortunately, overshadowed a child's need to learn appropriate skills for transition to adulthood. Then in 2000, Gov. Gray Davis issued a directive for a culturally diverse group of key child welfare stakeholders to examine the child welfare system. Their charge was to make recommendations for improvement.

The California Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group, arrived at the following definition to help youth *Transition to Adulthood*: (CWS Stakeholders Group, 2002)

Successful transition to adulthood refers to a planned transition of a youth from state supervised and supported care in which the state makes major decisions regarding the youth's life to a status in which the youth assumes responsibility for these decisions. These decisions include employment, housing, medical care, education, association with others and lifestyle. This transition is assisted through financial, material, educational, social and emotional supports designed to recognize the youth's history and experience of being in out-of-home care and the unique challenges that history presents to social functioning as an adult in society.

-Transition to Adulthood
CWS Stakeholders Group 2002

R See RESOURCE 4 for a copy of "Report to the Legislature: California's Independent Living Standards, 2000."

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Using this “*Transition to Adulthood*” definition as a basis, new strategies were recommended by the CWS stakeholders group, with the intent that youth transitioning out of foster care will have:

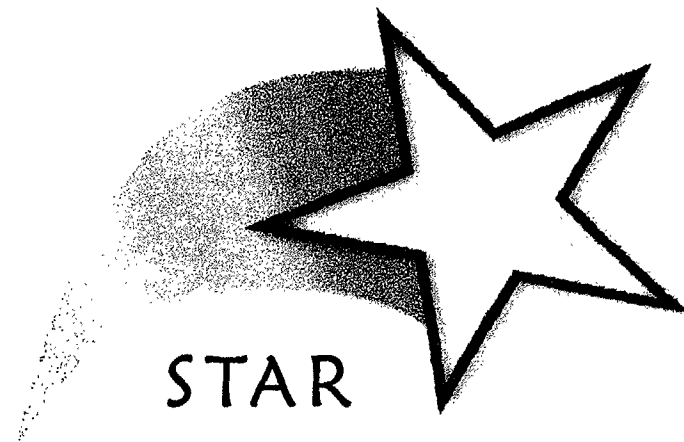
- ☆ A healthy sense of cultural and personal identity,
- ☆ Close, positive relationships with at least one adult and community connections,
- ☆ Access to physical and mental health services,
- ☆ Improved life skills,
- ☆ A high school diploma or GED,
- ☆ Income sufficient to meet basic needs,
- ☆ Safe and stable living situation.

ACTIVITY: Strategies for Success (45 minutes)

Objective: To obtain information regarding CWS strategies for successful transition to adulthood and to identify *STAR practices* for implementing those strategies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- ✓ Require that placement contracts of providers serving foster teens also integrate the theme of self-sufficiency education into the program.
- ✓ Establish services that create opportunities for the youth to integrate the development of life skills into their everyday lives. Tragedy awaits any child who is raised without the proper knowledge to become self-sufficient. The child who grows without a significant connection to another human being will also experience tragedy.
- ✓ Volunteer for participation on state-level committees to maintain knowledge of current events and contribute to the solution process.
- ✓ Identify challenges in your county that have or have not been resolved and share or seek assistance from colleagues at ILP Regional meetings. As a Regional Consortium, submit challenges of great concern to the Chairperson of the County Welfare Directors’ Association, Children’s Committee.



Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness

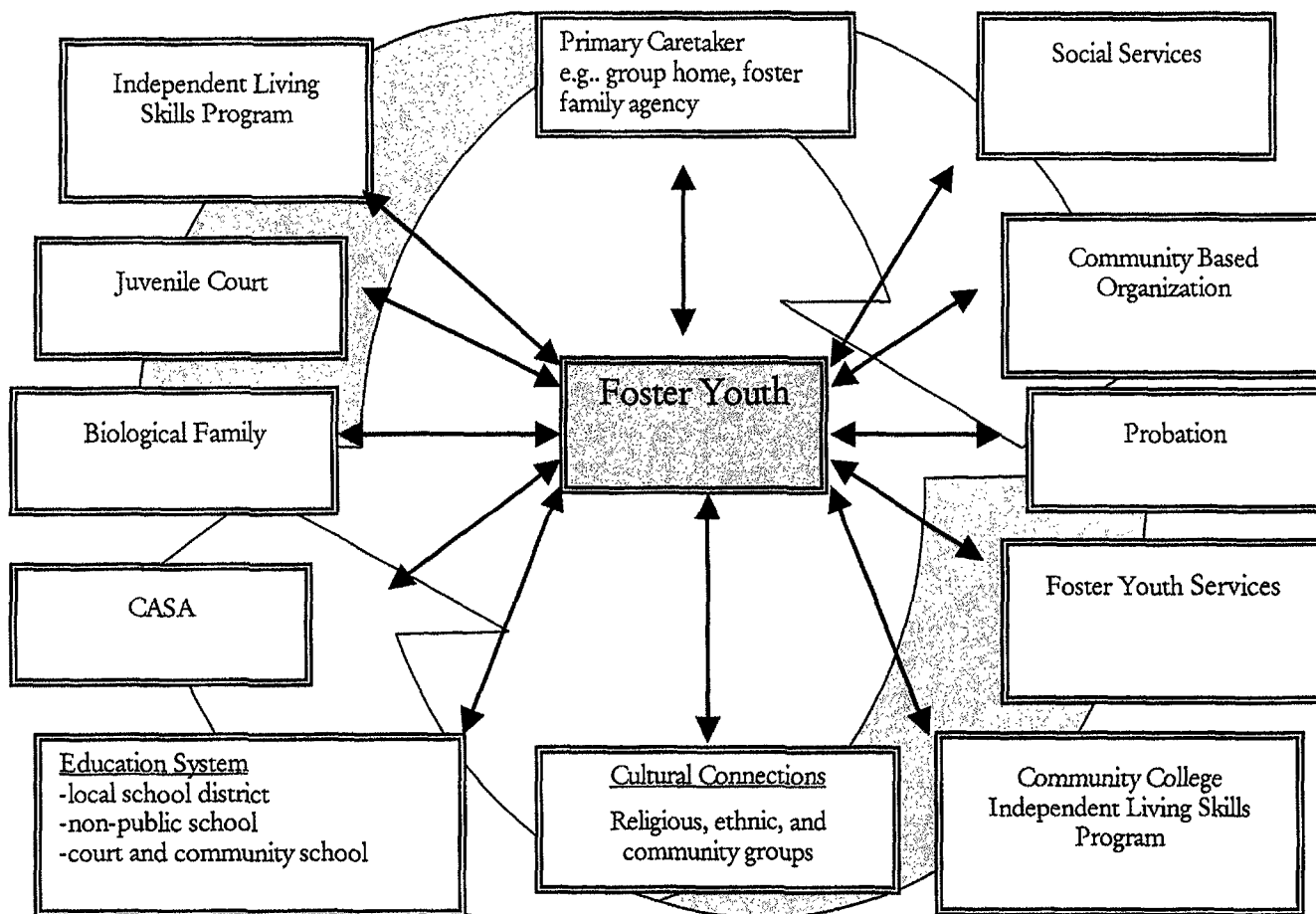
TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

SECTION III

COLLABORATING FOR
BETTER YOUTH
OUTCOMES

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION III: COLLABORATING FOR BETTER YOUTH OUTCOMES

MACRO LEVEL KEY PLAYERS



In the “STAR PRACTICE MODEL” at the macro level:

1. Policy and practice is youth-driven (youth at the center).
2. There are coordinated efforts within the organizational and community systems to work with the youth (↔ signifies 2-way communication).
3. Key players work with one another to ensure that services are not only appropriate, but are ‘truly’ meeting the needs of adolescents preparing to leave care (note large circular arrow which serves to connect all key players).

ACTIVITY: Show Me the Relationships (15 minutes)

Objective: To identify, and therefore personalize, local agencies or persons represented on the Macro Level Key Players Chart.

COLLABORATION DEFINED

The following definitions (Jones et.al., n.d.) may prove helpful in differentiating between collaboration and other actions that many people may believe constitute collaboration:

- a) **Collaboration** is working together to achieve a *common goal*. It implies substantial commitment of energy to fulfill a *shared vision*.
- b) **Cooperation** is acting jointly or concurrently to achieve *separate goals*.
- c) **Facilitation** is making it less difficult to achieve anyone's goals.
- d) **Coordination** is organizing individual actions into common, harmonious action.
- e) **Competition** is working independently to "win" your goal at the expense of the overall goal of the group.

COLLABORATION IN DETAIL

1. Collaboration is a...

- a) **Process** to reach goals that cannot be achieved acting alone or, at a minimum, cannot be reached efficiently.
- b) As a process, **collaboration is a means to an end**, not an end in itself.
- c) The desired ends are more comprehensive and appropriate services for families **that improve youth and family outcomes**.

2. Why Collaborate?

- a) Increasing demands for services,
- b) We have families in common,
- c) Inadequate resources to meet need,
- d) To create a system where children and families are served with the *fewest* possible barriers in the most *comprehensive* manner.

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3. Benefits of Collaboration

- a) Improved outcomes for children, families, and communities,
- b) No one program or agency alone can meet complex needs,
- c) More efficient use of resources,
- d) Reduce duplication of effort.

SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

1. Youth want a system with the following characteristics:

- a) Provides quick and efficient response,
- b) Personalized services,
- c) Treated with respect/listened to,
- d) Builds on their strengths,
- e) They can access consultation on life decisions.

2. Collaboration Competencies:

- a) Healthy sense of self,
- b) Sustaining effective relationships,
- c) Working successfully in groups,
- d) Navigating through organizations,
- e) Regional and national issues.

Collaboration is an essential part of the 'equation' in our work to prepare foster adolescents for adulthood. As stated in *Promising Practices: Supporting Transition of Youth Served by the Foster Care System* (Sheehy et..al., 2001):

- 1) Collaborations with community organizations can lead to job shadowing experiences, mentoring opportunities, and long-term personal connections.
- 2) Programs that promote community interactions and interagency collaboration are modeling for the youth the importance of networking and community support systems.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
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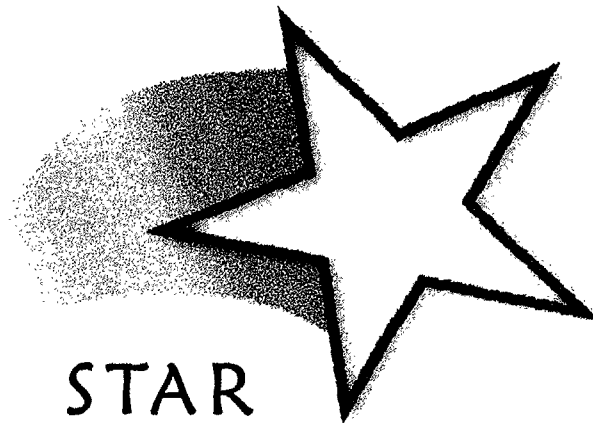
In fact, in a comprehensive evaluation of youth programs, the American Youth Policy Forum found that unsuccessful programs are generally the ones that only provide a single focus for intervention rather than addressing all the dimensions of the youth's developmental needs (Sheehy, et al., 2001).

R

See RESOURCE 5 for more detailed information on Successful Collaboration.

ACTIVITY: Supporting Collaboration (15 minutes)

Objective: To identify administrative supports that will initiate, foster and support collaborative efforts by their staff.



Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness

TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

SECTION IV

A FOUNDATION FOR
STAR PRACTICE

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION IV: A FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

EFFECTIVE POLICY CHANGES

Change is possible! There are many examples of recent foster care bills that have been implemented to ensure that the care provided to youth in California's foster care system is improved. The following bills represent a few examples of positive changes with the best interests of youth in mind.

FOSTER CARE BILLS	OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH
AB 1987 Sibling Issues	Requires social workers to notify children of significant events in the lives of their siblings or relatives.
AB 686 Dependent Children: Termination of Jurisdiction	Requires that 18-year-olds be present in court at the time of the termination hearing.
AB 2307 Relative Caregivers	Requires community college districts with foster care education programs to establish kinship orientation and training programs.
AB 2453 Student Records	Allows foster care agencies access to educational records of children in their care.
SB 2160 Dependent Children: Appointment of Counsel	Requires the court (1) to determine that a foster child would benefit from the appointment of an attorney and (2) whether this attorney has a 'manageable caseload' to ensure adequate representation.

This chart is a composite of information found on the California Youth Connection Web site, <http://www.calyouthconn.org/legislation.html> (California Youth Connection, 2000).

1. California Youth Connection, an organization comprised of former foster youth, has initiated legislation and policy decisions that facilitate youths' emancipation process. Examples include:

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION IV: A FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

- a) Waiver of the \$1,000 limit on savings for foster youth preparing to emancipate. The law now allows for \$10,000 in savings,
- b) Development of transitional housing pilot programs,
- c) Removal of barriers to obtaining driver's licenses for foster youth.

R

See RESOURCE 6 for more information on the California Youth Connection organization.

2. John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (U.S. Bill)
(discussed in Section II)

- a) Increases funding to states to assist youth making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency through support of the Independent Living Program and help to all service providers,
- b) Recognizes the need for special assistance for older youth (ages 18-21) by mandating that a portion of funding be provided to youth who have left foster care,
- c) Allows for the extension of Medicaid coverage to 21 years of age,
- d) States are given greater flexibility in structuring their independent living programs by allowing them to prepare children of various ages for self-sufficiency.

R

See RESOURCE 1 for more information on the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999

RIGHTS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

"While shelter and safety are vital elements of the State's responsibility, they are not sufficient to meet the State's moral, legal, or fiscal responsibilities."

(Parrish, Delano, Webster, & Bobe, 2001, p. 1-7)

1. Privacy and Confidentiality

- a) The youth has the right to confidential phone calls and to send and receive unopened letters, unless these rights have been limited for a good reason. [WIC 16001.9(a)(9); 22CCR 870729(a)(16), 84072 (b)(12)]

2. Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Sexual Assault, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Care

- a) A youth over the age of 12, without the consent of others, has the right to diagnosis and treatment of certain infections, contagious sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS and HIV testing. [Ca.Fam.Code 6926(a)]

3. Personal Freedom

- a) The youth has the right to participate in extracurricular, cultural, and personal enrichment activities, consistent with his/her age and developmental level. [WIC 16001.9(13)]

4. Legal Proceedings

- a) If the youth is 10 years of age or older, he/she has the right to be told what the plan is for emancipation and future and to know about changes. [WIC 16001.9(a)(19)]
- b) If the youth is 10 years of age or older, he/she has the right to meet with his/her lawyer before each court hearing. [WIC 349]

RAISING AND PROTECTING YOUTH

The system itself creates roadblocks to natural development of the skills required for independence. In the interests of ensuring children's safety, care and supervision, case plans and foster home regulations often inadvertently restrict foster youth from activities that are part of normal daily life for other teens.

1. History of Protecting Youth:

- a) The role of child welfare workers and community care licensing in serving children has historically concentrated on efforts to ensure child protection, safety, and reduced risk of endangerment.
- b) While these efforts are essential in providing safe care for youth, they may impede progress towards self-sufficiency.
- c) Adolescents in foster care are typically under the direction of many adults. Disempowerment for youth occurs in rigid, controlled environments and disenables them from developing their own decision-making skills.

2. Raising and Protecting Youth:

- a) Raising and protecting youth is a new model of practice that promotes self-sufficiency. This includes assisting the youth in personal life development, in addition to forming lifelong connections and making accommodations with their family of origin.
- b) Care providers need to develop a greater consciousness of the critical role they play in securing the future success of foster youth, and to find ways of effectively integrating this role into their day-to-day work.
- c) Allowing the youth to both feel *safe* and *supported* in practicing skills, building positive relationships and connecting with their communities helps develop competencies needed in adulthood.

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SECTION IV: A FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

PROTECTING VS. RAISING YOUTH

The Old Way of Doing Business by Protecting Youth	The Emerging Philosophy of Using "STAR Practice" to Raise Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent Living Programs are the primary teachers of life skills. Youth are sent to classes to learn skills such as money management, nutrition, household management, etc.• Independent Living Services are provided to youth 16 years of age and older.• All youth receive the same Independent Living Services.• The system (i.e. social workers, the courts, foster parents) determines what services the youth is in need of receiving.• Foster youth are fragile and need to be protected from harm, both physical and emotional. While there is some risk that youth will fail, this philosophy fosters incompetence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☆ Families/Caregivers and other caring adults are the best teachers of life skills. Youth must be exposed to a variety of environments. Skills are mastered by having the opportunity to "experience and do" with guidance and feedback from concerned adults.☆ Self-sufficiency work begins at the moment of intake. Youth of all ages can be taught the skills to live as independent adults; earlier is better.☆ The youth's self-sufficiency plan is tailored to his/her individual needs, strengths, and talents.☆ Based on individual assessment and goal planning, youth determine their needs while working closely with the caring adults in their world. As they grow, youth become increasingly more responsible for their life.☆ While there is some degree of risk, including the risk of failing, it is critical that the youth in out of home care have the opportunity to "try out" new skills. It is best for youth to be supported by caring adults during these times of "trial and error." This philosophy fosters responsibility.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

"Although the idea of youth development has been around for several years, we have just begun to see consistent movement of agencies involving youth in the development, implementation, and evaluation of their programs. This is done by creating an environment and opportunities where young people feel supported and safe in practicing skills, learning about relationships and connecting with their communities" (Sheehy, et al., 2001, p.14).

The youth are active participants in their own life.

- a) Youth are increasingly more responsible for their lives as they get older and approach emancipation; therefore it is important to include them in the planning of their future.
- b) Encouragement of youth and adults to cooperate and work together to make decisions fosters a youth's responsibility for himself/herself.
- c) The philosophy supports the inclusion of youth in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs working to build self-sufficiency and facilitate a more successful transition to adulthood.

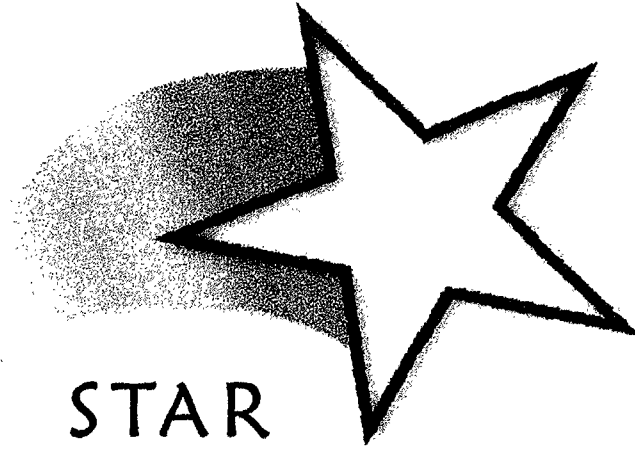
"Successful transition to adulthood, to a large degree, depends on the youth's ability to make appropriate decisions regarding his or her case plan. Youth who have a sense of self-esteem and who feel empowered are often better equipped to deal with the barriers as well as the opportunities that arise during and after care" (Sheehy, et al., 2001, p.14).

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
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ACTIVITY: Implementation of Raising and Protecting Philosophy
(10 minutes)

Objective: To determine the level at which the local IL program demonstrates the “raising and protecting” philosophy, and to identify the next steps to move it closer to *STAR practice*.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION V: A PLAN TO CHANGE



STAR

Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness

TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

SECTION V

A PLAN TO CHANGE

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION V: A PLAN TO CHANGE

**A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR
TRANSITIONING FOSTER YOUTH**

First Steps... what might the possibilities be if every decision at an agency was made with thoughts of:

- ☆ We want our youth to grow up to be healthy, competent, responsible adults.
- ☆ We want our decisions to help youth learn about the world.
- ☆ We want what we teach to help them succeed in the world.
- ☆ We want to make decisions that change youth outcomes.

Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate towards some goal, which they come to find desirable and which motivates them over the long haul."

Orvery Tead

ACTIVITY: The Road to Success (2.5 hours)

Objective: For participants to return to their local community with a preliminary strategic plan for implementing "STAR practices."

H

Please see HANDOUT 7 – Action Plan Worksheet.

STEERING AROUND THE ROADBLOCKS

The first thing we need is the will to change the way things are, to move beyond the status quo. Everyone needs to take responsibility for transitioning foster youth successfully, not place blame. Change is never easy, and change within a bureaucracy is even harder.

1. Successful Change Is More Likely When:

- a) It is embraced with an open mind.
- b) The what, when and how change will happen is communicated.
- c) The WHY is particularly important. For us it is:
 - 1) Direct impact on youth
 - a. continuing relationship with a supportive adult;
 - b. safe and stable place to live;
 - c. employed or in educational programs for development of marketable skills;
 - 2) Impact on professional skills
 - 3) Impact on organizational practice

2. What Must You Do To Make Change Happen?

- a) Be a change 'agent' and lead by example,
- b) Help others see the benefits change will make – set goals, reiterate process,
- c) Encourage others to try new things – create an atmosphere where others are encouraged to step outside their comfort zones and experience new things. Empower and support them to take risks (Walker, 1999).

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION V: A PLAN TO CHANGE

3. As A Leader Of Change You Must:

- d) Know where you want to go
- e) Have people committed to leading the way
- f) Be honest
- g) Be swift
- h) Be accountable at every level
- i) Make communication part of everyone's job
- j) Listen to people at all levels
- k) Give everyone a valued role and a chance to contribute
- l) Walk the talk
- m) Keep repeating key messages (Suss, 2000)

4. Eight Reasons For Resisting Change

- a) Fear of the unknown
- b) Lack of good information
- c) Fear for loss of security
- d) No reasons to change
- e) Fear for loss of power
- f) Lack of resources
- g) Bad timing
- h) Habit

“Planned change takes place because change agents, individuals and groups, make it happen to resolve performance problems or realize performance opportunities” (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn. 2000).

Activity: Steering Around the Roadblocks (10 minutes) Participants will be lead in a group discussion as to what the implications and/or consequences are that they may personally face as they implement the action plans developed for their county.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
SECTION V: A PLAN TO CHANGE

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- ✓ Identify barriers and/or misconceptions that may be inhibiting successful collaboration between you/your agency and an available resource/program.
- ✓ As a community, create processes that support a youth's growth in personal responsibility.
- ✓ As an agency, include youth in the design and implementation of new programs and services to provide the opportunity they need to empower themselves.
- ✓ Hire former foster youth and/or seek adolescent participants on advisory boards. As with adults, active participation provides the best learning experience.
- ✓ Think outside of the box when searching for agencies to serve transitioning youth.
- ✓ Maintain a strategic planning group to support community collaboration and strengthen linkages to address the entire scope of a youth's developmental needs.
- ✓ As an agency, commit at least one person to support the planning group and strengthen the community partnership.
- ✓ Continually educate the local community about children in foster care and how their transition to adulthood could be more successful with help from their community.

✓

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SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
HANDOUTS

HANDOUTS

In the pages that follow you will find a copy of each of the Handouts listed for use in the curriculum.

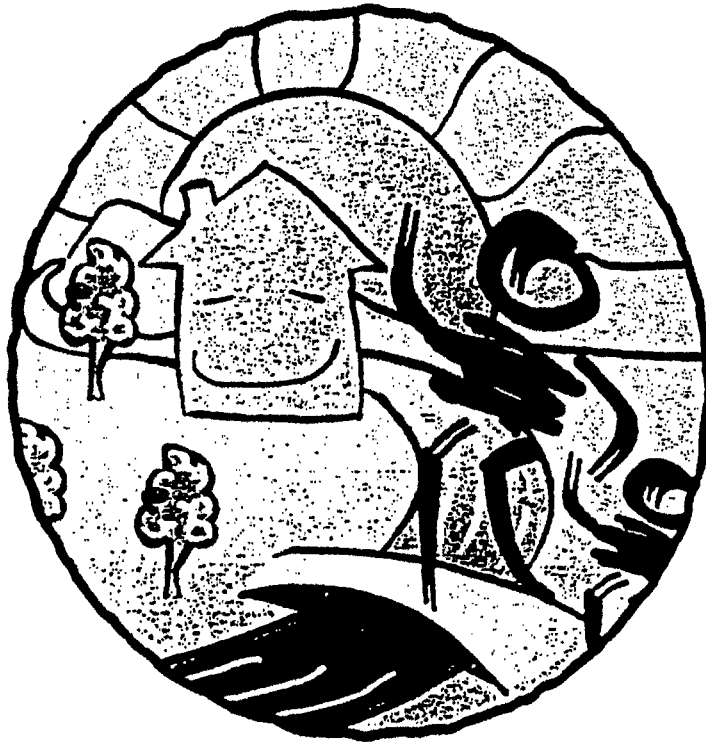
SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 1

**CWS STAKEHOLDERS GROUP CWS REDESIGN
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Handout 1 is an excerpt from CWS Stakeholders Group CWS Redesign Conceptual Framework. It has been saved in PDF format and can be found on the STAR website under additional resources for Training for Managers and Supervisors. A copy of the whole framework can be found at <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cws/pdf/progrpt2002.pdf>

CWS STAKEHOLDERS GROUP CWS REDESIGN
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



CWS

Stakeholders Group

*CWS Redesign:
Conceptual Framework*

VII. REPORT OF THE SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT OUTCOMES WORKGROUP



Successful Placement Outcomes Workgroup Membership

Patricia Aguiar, Child & Youth Permanency Branch, California Department of Social Services

Robin Allen, Executive Director, California Court Appointed Special Advocate

Bonnie Armstrong, Regional Advocate, Casey Family Programs

Janet Atkins, First Vice President, SEIU, Local 535

Wes Beers, Chief, Operations & Evaluation Branch, California Department of Social Services

Maureen Borland, Director, San Mateo County Human Services Agency

Miryam Choca, Director of Division Operations, Casey Family Programs

Nina Coake, Past-President, California State Foster Parent Association

Jill Duerr Berrick, Ph.D., Director, UC Berkeley Center for Social Service Research

Brandy Hudson, Youth Representative, California Youth Connection

Cora Pearson, President, California State Foster Parent Association

Carroll Schroeder, Executive Director, California Alliance of Child and Family Services

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SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT OUTCOMES: Our Commitment to Change

OVERVIEW

The Successful Placement Outcomes Workgroup (SPO Workgroup) espouses a commitment to permanency for every child entering out-of-home care. Toward this end, the Workgroup recognizes permanency as involving three essential elements:

1. **Parental Custody.** The parent or guardian in a permanent arrangement has custody of the child. Custody in permanency cannot rest with the state.
2. **Parental or Guardian Commitment.** The parent or guardian is committed to meet the child or youth's developmental needs, including preparing the child or youth for adulthood.
3. **Emotional Security.** The child or youth experiences a trust that the parent-child or youth relationship will endure through space and time.

Permanency has both legal and emotional components. Permanency involves exiting the child welfare system to a legal relationship with an adult caregiver. It also involves emotional commitments on behalf of the caregiver and a sense of emotional security on the part of the child or youth. The SPO Workgroup offers the following definition of permanency:

Permanency occurs when a child or youth is living in a legal relationship with an adult caregiver where the caregiver holds a commitment to meeting the child or youth's developmental needs through transition to adulthood and the child or youth experiences a sense of emotional security regarding the enduring nature of his or her relationship with the parent or guardian.

The SPO Workgroup suggests a hierarchy of preferences for permanency outcomes. This hierarchy is based on the extent to which the three elements of permanency are present.

- Safe reunification with birthparents
- Adoption or guardianship by relatives
- Adoption by a non-relative foster parent
- Adoption by a non-relative other than the foster parent
- Non-relative guardianship

Transition to adulthood either by emancipation or aging out of the child welfare system is not considered a permanency outcome as it contains neither the legal nor emotional components of permanency.

Historical Context

Permanency has not always been a primary concern for children in out-of-home care. The modern era of family foster care in America can be traced to Charles Loring Brace and the Orphan Trains. During their operation, more than 100,000 orphaned and abandoned children were sent from the east to live with mid-western families. Out of concern and in exchange for the value of the child's labor, families provided free foster care. Later, between 1886 and 1911, Charles Birtwell and the Boston Children's Aid Society established family foster care as a short-term arrangement and incorporated the idea of rehabilitation of the birth family and reunification of the child. Birtwell developed a systematic means for studying prospective foster families and for supervising them once approved.

In the late 1950's concern increased about the plight of children in foster care. Various studies observed that children experienced multiple placements and seemed to "drift" in care. In the early 1970's, a project in Oregon, whose original purpose was to terminate parental rights on children who had been in care for a long time, discovered that circumstances had changed in many birth families and that about half of the children could return home. The Oregon Project, as it became known, launched a national campaign for permanency planning. This paved the way for the passage of PL 96-272. Passed in 1980, it contained requirements for:

- Periodic case review every six months
- Reasonable efforts to prevent placement
- Reasonable efforts to reunify children
- A determination hearing at eighteen months
- Termination of parental rights and adoptive or guardianship placement where children could not be reunified

In support of these requirements, California passed Senate Bill 14 in the Statutes of 1982. These laws set specific timeframes intended to communicate a sense of urgency. Many advocates believed that these laws and aggressive permanency planning efforts would result in ever fewer children in foster care. Regrettably things did not turn out this way.

Current Trends

In 1988, there were 52,159 children in foster care in California, representing 6.5 children per 1,000. In October 2001, there were 96,087, or 9.3 children per 1,000 in foster care, or an 84% increase over 1988. Table 1 (Needell, B. et. al., 2002) presents the California foster care population by placement type and race or ethnicity as of October 1, 2001. Table 2 presents the California foster care population by placement type and age.

Table 1
Children in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care by
Placement Type and Ethnicity, California, October 1, 2001

	Black		White		Hispanic		Asian/Oth.		Nat Amer		Missing		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pre-Adopt	1,144	3.5	903	3.4	1,334	4.1	74	3.9	26	2.2	0	0.0	3,481	3.6
Kin	14,012	42.8	7,999	29.7	12,355	37.6	550	29.1	434	36.1	124	26.7	35,474	36.9
Foster	4,881	14.9	5,153	19.1	5,062	15.4	356	18.8	234	19.5	116	25.0	15,802	16.4
FFA	5,569	17.0	6,055	22.5	7,148	21.7	454	24.0	224	18.7	87	18.8	19,537	20.3
Group	2,580	7.9	2,651	9.8	1,946	5.9	127	6.7	98	8.2	16	3.4	7,418	7.7
Institution	494	1.5	630	2.3	669	2.0	65	3.4	25	2.1	30	6.5	1,913	2.0
Guardian	2,770	8.5	1,989	7.4	1,631	5.0	118	6.2	93	7.7	63	13.6	6,664	6.9
Missing Type	129	0.4	120	0.4	473	1.4	22	1.2	***	0.3	***	0.6	751	0.8
Runaway	137	0.4	159	0.6	180	0.5	13	0.7	8	0.7	***	0.2	498	0.5
Tr. Home Visit	541	1.7	645	2.4	1,177	3.6	63	3.3	25	2.1	10	2.2	2,461	2.6
Other (?)	450	1.4	647	2.4	899	2.7	48	2.5	30	2.5	14	3.0	2,088	2.2
Total	32,707	100.0	26,951	100.0	32,874	100.0	1,890	100.0	1,201	100.0	464	100.0	96,087	100.0

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2001 Quarter 3 Extract

Black children made up only 7% of California's child population in 2001, but accounted for 34% of those in care on July 1, 2001. By contrast, Hispanic children made up 43% of the state's child population, but accounted for only 34% of those in care on July 1, 2001. The increase in the overall number of children in foster care and the considerable disproportionality of Black children in care reflect two of the challenges facing the placement service system today.

There are some positive trends. For every year between 1988 and 1997 the number of children entering care exceeded the number of children exiting care. In 1999 and 2000, the number of children exiting care exceeded the number of children entering care. Adoptions have increased. Children placed with relatives experience greater stability while in placement.

Table 2
Children in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care by
Placement Type and Age, California, October 1, 2001

	<1 yr		1-5 yrs		6-10 yrs		11-15 yrs		16+ yrs		Total	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Pre-Adopt	20	0.5	1,644	7.2	1,208	4.4	538	1.8	71	0.6	3,481	3.6
Kin	1,099	30.0	9,491	41.4	10,897	40.1	10,217	34.2	3,770	30.2	35,474	36.9
Foster	1,316	35.9	4,266	18.6	3,905	14.4	4,230	14.2	2,085	16.7	15,802	16.4
FFA	822	22.4	4,943	21.6	5,835	21.5	5,815	19.5	2,122	17.0	19,537	20.3
Group	43	1.2	189	0.8	1,322	4.9	3,839	12.9	2,025	16.2	7,418	7.7
Institution	93	2.5	270	1.2	348	1.3	695	2.3	507	4.1	1,913	2.0
Guardian	12	0.3	623	2.7	2,114	7.8	2,904	9.7	1,011	8.1	6,664	6.9
Missing Type	50	1.4	235	1.0	233	0.9	181	0.6	52	0.4	751	0.8
Runaway	0	0.0	***	0.0	***	0.0	178	0.6	314	2.5	498	0.5
Tr. Home Visit	79	2.2	725	3.2	792	2.9	681	2.3	184	1.5	2,461	2.6
Other (?)	128	3.5	544	2.4	516	1.9	554	1.9	346	2.8	2,088	2.2
Total	3,662	100.0	22,932	100.0	27,174	100.0	29,832	100.0	12,487	100.0	96,087	100.0

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2001 Quarter 3 Extract

Recognizing the vast complexity and numerous elements involved in California's foster care and permanency systems, The Successful Placement Outcomes Workgroup recognized that time would not permit examination and recommendations for all that might be improved. With this in mind, the Group identified improvement in reunification outcomes as a first priority. Improved transition of youth to adulthood became the second. As a result of the recent success of the Adoption Initiative, the SPO Workgroup chose to concentrate its emphasis on reunification and successful transitions to adulthood.

Stakeholders Group Foundation

The SPO Workgroup recognized the foundation laid by the full Stakeholders group in its first year. A number of assumptions and beliefs became the platform on which new strategies would be formed. While all of the first year assumptions are relevant, twenty-eight are highlighted here. They include:

California Stakeholders Group Assumptions and Beliefs Relevant to Successful Placement Outcomes

1. Maltreatment within families has dynamic qualities that interact with, but are not simply caused by, other family problems, e.g. substance abuse and domestic violence.
2. Different forms of maltreatment have different causes that imply differentiation of assessment and intervention approaches.
3. Caregivers should be personally accountable for the care of a child.
4. Child maltreatment results from the convergence of individual, family, ecological and community factors.
5. Children develop and fare better if they have a permanent emotional attachment to a legally responsible adult caretaker.
6. A child is entitled to live in the least restrictive, most family-like and community-based setting that can meet the child's needs for safety and developmental support.
7. Every child's needs should be assessed.
8. Differing family circumstances should indicate different responses.
9. Placement can have harmful effects.
10. Positive incentives are generally more effective than negative incentives in producing long-term changes in behavior.
11. Child safety from child maltreatment takes precedence over parental rights.
12. Children should be removed from their homes as a safety intervention only when safety cannot be assured in the home.

13. A statewide common agreed-upon framework and set of criteria should guide decisions about needs and interventions with families in which child maltreatment occurs and safety is a concern.
 14. As long as children are safe from maltreatment, they are entitled to be raised by their family.
 15. Family members are entitled to due process and a court appearance where loss of a fundamental right is at stake.
 16. The extent of control used in the intervention should generally relate to the severity of the danger to the child.
 17. The success of a maltreatment intervention depends partially on the direct actions of the caseworker.
 18. The likelihood of success increases where the family and professionals mutually agree upon decisions.
 19. Planned change in human social behavior is more likely to occur in the context of a supportive helping relationship.
 20. Behavior is initiated and maintained through a system of social supports.
 21. Continuity of relationships influences trust, a necessary ingredient for positive change.
 22. In child maltreatment cases, the time allowed for change in the family is determined by the developmental needs of the child.
 23. The primary role of foster parents is to meet the child's basic needs in the areas of health, development, emotional support, safety and socialization toward adulthood.
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24. Outcomes are enhanced for the child and birth family when the foster family works as a partner with the agency in meeting the child's needs for permanency.
 25. Outcomes are improved for the child when the foster parents support the child's continuing relationship with the birth family.
 26. Outcomes are improved for the child when the birth family perceives the foster family as a resource and support to the birth family in meeting the child's well-being needs.
 27. Foster parents are a resource for permanency.
 28. Foster parents are a resource to youth after they leave care.

With regard to assumptions 23-28, a parallel set of assumptions were developed for relative caregivers.

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT?

The SPO Workgroup identified many challenges to be addressed in the redesign. Permanency will be the central focus and as such will permeate every decision, action, and interaction. Successful CWS redesign will result in:

- Improved safe reunification outcomes for all children, and especially for Black children who achieve this outcome less frequently and with longer stays in care than their counterparts
- Improved successful transition of youth emancipating or aging out of care
- Improved success in permanency through adoption
- Improved success in permanency through guardianship
- Improved well-being of children and youth in care
- More fair and equitable process and outcomes for children and youth in care
- Less time spent in care without a safe and permanent placement
- Improved child and youth participation in decision-making

HOW WILL IT BE DIFFERENT?

The SPO Workgroup supports several strategic changes in the approach of the California child welfare system. They are:

To support reunification:

- Assertive in-home safety planning involving expanded safety services and reunification safety plans
- Newly focused case plans and related interventions
- Differently engaging birth parents in the ongoing care of their children
- Post Reunification Supports and Services

To support successful adult transitions:

- Developmentally based preparation is offered from intake through aftercare
- Caregivers prepare youth for adult success and reinforce training provided elsewhere
- Youth are in charge of their transition plan
- Interventions enhance or develop connections to family, friends and community resources

SPO STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Traditionally, in law as in practice, we have tended to regard family reunification in either/or terms - that is, children should be either reunited with their families or placed in adoption or other settings. Research, as well as practice, indicates that this premise is too simplistic and not responsive to the needs and qualities of families coming to the attention of child welfare agencies. Accordingly, Robin Warsh, Tony Maluccio and Barbara Pine have proposed the following definition of family reunification:

Family reunification is the planned process of reconnecting children in out-of-home care with their families by means of a variety of services and supports to the children, their families, and their foster parents or other service providers. It aims to help each child and family to achieve and maintain, at any given time, their optimal level of reconnection - from full reentry of the child into the family system to other forms of contact, such as visiting, that affirm the child's membership in the family. (Warsh, Maluccio, and Pine, 1994: 3).

Family may include non-related family members or persons close to the family who have had a meaningful role in family life. Community supports include both informal as well as formal systems.

Reunification is a form of family preservation, representing a strategy for permanence and the achievement of emotional security for the child. In the recent history of child welfare practice, family preservation has come to be defined as a set of intensive, time-limited in-home services designed to prevent entry into out-of-home care. The rationale for efforts to prevent placement has centered on the effects of separation and loss of the birth family on the child and the probability of multiple placements and permanent loss of the birth family subsequent to entry into care. In a broader context, family preservation may be thought of at three levels. The first would be protection of the continuity of care by family members. The second is the restoration of autonomy and preservation of attached relationships with birth family members lost temporarily during the child's period in care. The third is the preservation of elements of identity and relationships, e.g. with siblings or grandparents. Each of these preserves one or more of the four key elements of families, attachments, identity, autonomy and efficacy.

Unfortunately, these practices have been segmented into different concepts of family preservation, reunification and openness in adoption. Since formal family preservation programs have traditionally used entry into placement as a chief evaluation measure, the expansion of the concept of family preservation to include reunification and openness in adoption conflicts with common usage. Yet, no other term seems to fit the expanded practice concept as well as family preservation. In addition to these considerations, the National Association of Black Child Welfare Administrators has taken a position that kinship or relative care is a form of family preservation. This position reflects an African-American cultural strength of flexible family roles. It also raises policy issues regarding the commitment of resources to rehabilitation of the birth parent to full caregiver status and functioning when a child is in a relative care circumstance.

Such an expanded view of family reunification (as a form of family preservation) underscores the value of maintaining and enhancing connectedness or re-connectedness between children in

out-of-home care and their families or members of their extended kinship system, while also providing for child safety. At the same time, it recognizes that not every parent can be a daily caregiver and that some families, though not able to live together, can still maintain kinship bonds. Strategies for reunification congruent with this definition would exhibit the following characteristics:

- Family reunification should be systematically considered and planned for by the child welfare and legal systems as early as possible in a child's placement in out-of-home care – and in many cases even before the child enters into care. Its timing should be determined by the needs and qualities of the child and her/his family and reflect the urgency of continuing the child's development safely within the family.
- Family reunification should be viewed by all who provide services to the family as a continuum, with levels or outcomes ranging from full reentry into the family system to partial reentry to less extensive contact. At any point during the child's placement in out-of-home care, the most appropriate or optimal level of reconnection should be identified and actively pursued. At the same time, it should be recognized that reconnection is not possible or desirable in some situations, and that those situations may appropriately require termination of parental rights. Even under these circumstances, aspects of family identity and contact may be maintained.
- It is important to involve, as appropriate, any and all members of the child's family, including members of the extended family or others who, while not legally related, are considered by the child and themselves to be "family."
- Human diversity – for example, culture, race, ethnicity, and ability – should be respected. Life-styles and child-rearing methods that might be considered different or unusual should be accepted so long as they promote a child's health and safety. This principle is especially crucial because a disproportionate number of children in care come from low-income families or families of color.
- A commitment to early and consistent contact between the child and family is an essential ingredient in preparing for and maintaining a successful reunification. Child-family contact can serve as a laboratory in which both parties work on the problems that may have contributed to the need for placement and learn new ways to be together again.
- The specific time of reunification represents a time of considerable stress on family members and requires specific supports. Family reunification services should be offered for as long as they are needed to maintain the reconnection of a child with the family. The intensity of the services should match the needs of the family over time. For a few families, some level of service may be necessary until the child is ready for independent living.

With this definition as a basis, the SPO Workgroup recommends that several new strategies be incorporated into the redesign work plan.

Strategy 1: Early Reunification with Expanded Safety Services

The SPO Workgroup recognizes that many children are brought into care due to safety threats existing at the point of initial contact. Many also return home within a few days. For those who remain in care longer than 30 days, the likelihood of reunification declines as time passes. As the length of time in care progresses, dynamics develop that work against reunification. Focus may shift from the actual safety factors to completion of case plan steps that, while tied to risk, may not relate to safety. In other words, a child might be able to be safe at home, but due to other factors that have become tied to the case plan, reunification cannot occur until later. Since the case plan becomes an order of the court, new formal court procedures are required in order to make changes in the plan.

Although early reunification is desired, for children who remain in care longer than five days and reunify within 90 days appear to re-enter out-of-home care at higher rates. This suggests the necessity of supports through the six months following reunification.

The SPO Workgroup strategy for early reunification contains several elements:

- Within seven days of entering care on an emergency removal and prior to any non-emergency removal a staffing that includes the family members is held to examine the *safety factors associated with entry into care. (This requires training and a flexible yet structured approach to the meetings.)*
- The team conducting the staffing would be responsible for identifying the safety services necessary to assure child safety within the home *at this time*.
- The staffing includes provisions for family participation in decision-making.
- Where these services can be provided and maintained, the agency approaches the court and requests reunification with continuation of services in the home.
- Where the in-home safety plan cannot be put in place immediately, a second staffing is held within 21 days to determine the family conditions necessary for changing from an out-of-home care safety plan to an in-home safety plan. These criteria would then become the basis of reunification and become incorporated in the 30-day case plan.
- Barring the development of new safety threats, once the conditions have been reached and irrespective of the completion of service programs, the agency would approach the court to consider reunification and continuation of the service plan with the child in the home.
- A necessary component of periodic case review would include the current status of safety threats and the necessity of the current level of safety services

In order to implement this strategy, a statewide safety model is needed that is jointly applied by CWS, the courts, police, attorneys, CASA and GAL's.

Strategy 2: Engaging birthparents in an ongoing caregiving role while the child is in out-of-home care

Dr. Vera Fahlberg suggests that the arousal/relaxation cycle is an important basis of attachment. In this framework the child experiences a need (hunger, discomfort, fear, etc) and becomes aroused. When the parent intervenes by feeding, comforting, etc. the need is met and the child experiences relaxation. The repeated experience of this phenomenon is an important component of the development of trust in very young children, and is also important to early brain development. When children enter out-of-home care, the birth parent is significantly removed from this cycle. Though the out-of-home caregiver may meet the child's needs, the child and the birth parent miss experiences necessary to the development of attachment.

A similar dynamic occurs with older children. Though the child may be attached to the birth parent by the time the child enters care, the cycle of need is broken. As the child over time does not experience this reciprocal cycle with the birth parent, attachment may diminish. For these reasons, not simply is visitation necessary, the nature of visitation is extremely important. Similarly, older children who have been in the system for longer periods of time may have experienced diminished contact and opportunities to maintain attachment.

Currently, much visitation is constructed around simple maintenance of contact. The structure of supervised visitation can be very frustrating for both child and parent. Visitation is generally short, in settings that limit social interaction, and often designed so that parent and child are not able to complete and repeat the arousal/relaxation cycle. In fact, there may be considerable arousal of need without relaxation. Children frequently return to the out-of-home care setting distraught and upset, leading some out-of-home caregivers to request that visits be halted as they are "upsetting the child."

The SPO Workgroup's strategy for engagement of birthparents in ongoing caregiving would have several components:

- Placement of children in their home community with reasonable access by birth parents.
- Placement of children with their siblings.
- Out-of-home caregivers would be specifically prepared and supported in various roles necessary to more frequent and meaningful contact.
- Birth parents would be expected to participate in ongoing parenting of the child. This might include shopping for the child's clothes, attending doctor's visits, participating in school conferences, addressing behavioral and developmental issues, etc, but all within safety considerations for the child.
- Visitation would be structured so as to involve the parent in the care of the child, including feeding, grooming, and discipline where needed, etc.
- These experiences would be used as mentoring opportunities and as observation of parent child interactions.

- Parents of children under the age of one would have daily opportunities for interaction with the child and be expected to participate a minimum time each visit in the supervised care of the child. These visits will be designed within the safety considerations of relevant parties.
- Visitation activities would include elements that build on the goals of the case plan and offer opportunities for practice and coaching in areas related to the needs of the child for safety and well-being.
- Supervised visitation would occur when safety requires it or when supervision is necessary to the learning or assessment objectives of the visitation.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

The data on the experiences of children exiting care that have neither been reunified with their birth families nor found permanency through adoption or guardianship is mixed. In time, many youth survive and do well. In the short term, the transition is often problematic. For some the short term is also the long term.

Transitioning youth are less likely to finish high school and may experience homelessness, poverty, sexual exploitation, rejection, and unemployment and be lured into criminal activity. Estimates suggest that as many as 50% may return to parts of their birth family. While such cases are hopefully few, evidence exists of youth being locked out of their foster homes on the date of their emancipation, not being told of their emancipation and being offered no real plan for transition.

National baseline data regarding transitioning youth reflects the following:

- One third of the children in out of home care are teenagers. (Caliber Associates, 1999)
- Three most critical challenges facing youth leaving care in NJ are lack of housing; failed relational support and limited medical and mental health services. (Eisenbud, 2001)
- Many youth discharged from out of home care have a difficult time making the transition to living on their own. A substantial portion has not attained basic educational goals such as completing high school. (Fragioni, May 1999)
- Mark Courtney finds that youth leaving foster care are vulnerable to physical and sexual victimization, underemployment and unemployment, homelessness, incarceration and public assistance utilization in higher numbers than youth in this age cohort who had not been placed in the CWS. (Courtney & Piliavin, 1998)
- Many youth have the misconception that the CWS will be available to them after discharge from care to help them meet their needs. (Courtney & Piliavin, 1998)
- Participation in ILP was linked to improved education, housing, and employment. (Courtney & Piliavin, 1998)

This year approximately 4,000 youth will emancipate from the California Child Welfare system. The SPO Workgroup believes that a successful system would have several characteristics. It would:

- Match the youth's needs with family capability versus "filling the empty bed"
 - Allow placement changes as appropriate
 - Employ trained former foster youth to assist with mentoring
 - Train, support and incentivize care providers to prepare foster youth for successful adulthood
 - Prepare youth for future relationship with birth family
 - Recognize within redesign that youth who have not reunified or achieved adult permanency may have unique and intense challenges
 - Potentiate hope
 - Create and sustain bridge from dependency to self-sufficiency
 - Ensure that youth have a voice; maximize opportunities for participation
 - Continue healthcare, housing, mental health benefits
 - Provide/facilitate financial support for education
 - Help youth remain in their own community after exiting where positive social support is in place
 - Have a significant experiential component
-
- Levels of support:
 - Peer support
 - Mentoring
 - Advocacy
 - Provide knowledge of available resources
 - Address diversity issues capably
 - Not be age-driven; doesn't "send youth on their way" until they are ready to go
 - Allow youth to "make mistakes" and maintain placement
 - Offer a youth driven plan specified by and with youth
 - Begin early (at intake) and in the natural environment
 - Use a standardized assessment

- Provide emancipation conferences
- Provide a safety net of support; lets youth "back in" as needed
- Include education, life skills and work skills with significant support provided

The SPO Workgroup recognizes that many successful programs containing many of these elements currently exist in California. The system needs to build on the strengths of these existing programs, working toward integrated comprehensive service models.

A well functioning support system for transitioning youth would be able to manage or impact:

- Foster Family capability and motivation to teach, mentor, prepare, etc.
 - Youth's own capability to manage
 - Having a significant, attached relationship with at least one caring adult
 - Criteria for placement change, i.e., leaving foster or group home "open" for child to return to if temporarily moved
 - Educational attainment
 - Strong connection with siblings and biological family and tools to manage
 - Supportive transitional housing
 - Transitional living plan
 - Fragmentation in delivery of services
 - Opportunities to experience "normal" life activities
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- Developing capacity for self-protection
 - Consider trans-racial placements for culture-specific training/preparation
 - Employment preparation, placement
 - Self advocacy skills
 - Providing adult-like growth experiences
 - Age-appropriate case plans
 - Accountability (system)

These efforts have traditionally been called "Independent Living." Independent living is in many ways a misnomer. No one lives independently. In reality successful social functioning in society involves the ability to establish and maintain *interdependent* relationships necessary for survival, growth and fulfillment. The term "independent living" was originally developed to convey independence from the child welfare system. Even this is being reconsidered in light of many modern realities. Even children raised in families without experiencing abuse may take until their

mid-thirties to become fully independent of their families. Even then, grandparents often provide childcare and some financial subsidy. For these reasons the workgroup has renamed the service "Successful Transition to Adulthood."

The SPO Workgroup suggests the following definition of Transition to Adulthood:

Successful transition to adulthood refers to a planned transition of a youth from state supervised and supported care in which the state makes major decisions regarding the youth's life to a status in which the youth assumes responsibility for these decisions. These decisions include employment, housing, medical care, education, association with others and lifestyle. This transition is assisted through financial, material, educational social and emotional supports designed to recognize the youth's history and experience of being in out-of-home care and the unique challenges that history presents to social functioning as an adult in society.

With this definition as a basis, the SPO Workgroup recommends that several new strategies be incorporated into the redesign work plan.

It is the SPO Workgroup's intent that youth transitioning out of the foster care system will have:

- A healthy sense of cultural and personal identity
 - Close, positive relationships with at least one adult and community connections
 - Access to physical and mental health services
 - Improved life skills
 - A high school diploma or GED
 - Income sufficient to meet basic needs
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- A safe and stable living situation

Strategy 1: Comprehensive, integrated model of transition services

Successful transition to adulthood requires systematic, developmentally appropriate preparation progressing over time. At the same time, youth benefit from individualized services, responsive to their particular needs, preferences and learning styles. To respond to both of these requirements, it is helpful to implement a continuum of services that integrates structured programming available for all developmentally appropriate foster youth with individualized services and supports. Structured programming includes support for educational achievement (tutors, aggressive school links and follow-up), relevant and applied life skills training and progressive employment experiences for all four years of high school. Individualized services include physical and mental health care, mentors, transitional housing, and the flexibility to provide additional services that individual youth need to successfully transition into adulthood. Planning for these services is youth centered and coordinated through the transition caseworker. To the greatest extent possible, foster parents and caregivers offer or reinforce learning experiences in the home setting.

Strategy 2: Youth experience

Youth in care need real world and real time experiences. Concerns about liability inordinately restrict youth from practicing and participating in life experiences accessible to other youth. These real life experiences are the essential building blocks for successful growth and development. When structured appropriately they promote school success, good health, leadership, resistance to danger, delaying gratification and overcoming adversity. These experiences should focus on helping youth build positive relationships, create boundaries, structure their use of time, stimulate interest in learning, cultivate positive values, engage in leadership projects which build decision making, planning and assertiveness, and contribute to the community. They should also encourage youth to obtain employment, a bank account, a driver's license, a social security card, and other necessary records. The state should address risk and liability issues that would permit youth to engage in young adult experiences that develop skills associated with adult functioning

Strategy 3: Developmentally staged transition planning and preparation

Adult transition services will begin at intake. The focus on adult transition services sharpens beginning at age 12 and for the duration of their stay in placement regardless of the permanency goal. Each youth is assigned an adult transitions caseworker, specifically trained to support foster parents, kinship caregivers and group or residential care providers in preparing adolescents for self-sufficiency. The role of the adult transitions caseworker will be to provide coaching and support to the caregiver. This caseworker works concurrently with the foster care or adoption worker coordinating the preparation for adulthood with the permanency plan. These services are developmentally appropriate and needed until successful transition, reunification or adoption is accomplished.

The adult transitions caseworker is specifically recruited and trained to consult with foster parents and other caregivers and to assist in planning and preparation for adulthood. This includes knowledge of resources available to the young person and advocacy efforts on their behalf.

Foster parents and other caregivers would carry out the primary role in preparing youth to transition to adulthood. To do this they will need specific training for parenting adolescents in setting standards for appropriate conduct, acting as role models, providing discipline which promotes responsibility, setting reasoned limits to protect and promote physical and emotional safety and monitoring whereabouts and peer interactions. Parents and other caregivers also need training in how to use 'teachable moments' to create experiences and reinforce learning that youth need for successful transition. Foster parent training needs to focus on working collaboratively with the agency and birth family to support the young person's self sufficiency and permanency.

A plan for preparation for independent living skill development needs to begin at age 12 and be updated annually to focus on the changing preparation needs as the young person grows and develops into young adulthood. The plan needs to examine a number of areas including employment, education, housing, relationships, sexuality, high-risk behaviors, self-care, documents, health and recreation. The plan needs to be done in conjunction with the service plan and be a part of the foster care review.

Youth must be at the heart of the planning process and be assisted in taking increasing charge of the process and content over time. At the youth's discretion, people who offer significant support, including birth family and other community members, are invited to planning meetings. How family members may support the transition and the changing role of birth parents, including the youth's need for support in managing these changing relationships, should be part of the on-going considerations.

Near the time of exit, a final family conference is held involving members of the youth's family that may constitute a support network. Two issues need to be finalized. These include how family members may support the transition and how birth parents may re-enter the youth's life positively or negatively. Where re-involvement may be negative, the youth may require supports in managing ongoing relationships with the birth parent.

Strategy 4: Housing

Current and former foster youth require a continuum of safe, stable and affordable housing options to meet their needs. Options should reflect differences in youth requirements and preferences at least along the following dimensions: degree of supervision, proximity to other youth (group care to individual scattered site housing), cost (ranging from wholly subsidized to market rate) and location. Ideally, young people in transition should experience a progression of living options, allowing them to master the tricky requirements of living on their own gradually and over time. Remaining with the foster family or relative should be an option.

The state and counties need to provide leadership to develop and maintain a pool of landlords that will rent to youth exiting care. This housing may or may not be subsidized depending on the needs of youth. Communities should coalesce around the emancipated foster youth and develop local housing plans tailored to local needs and resources. Local jurisdictions can make foster youth a priority position for housing assistance with HUD. Housing options for college bound youth during school breaks and vacations need to be developed. As well, in California, each community's general plan has to have a housing element. The needs of foster care youth exiting care should be addressed in the general plan.

Strategy 5: Court Oversight

Court oversight would be strengthened to assure that developmentally appropriate planning occurs and that the youth receive a range of "guaranteed services." All youth will receive a six-month written notice of the agency's intent to emancipate. Foster care placements shall be maintained until an approved transitional living arrangement is secured.

STRATEGIES FOR ALTERNATIVE PERMANENCY

All things working out well, every child and birthparent would likely prefer family preservation (including reunification) as the preferred permanency option. Unfortunately, circumstances do not always permit this end to intervention. This necessitates consideration of an alternative form of permanency, either through adoption or guardianship.

California has made considerable progress through its Adoption Initiative. Adoption finalizations have increased. While this is good news, the adoptions finalized appear to be principally from a backlog of cases in which an adoptive family had already been identified and only finalization remained. An increase in the rate of identification of adoptive families for other waiting children is less evident.

The SPO Workgroup believes that the strategies of the Adoption Initiative are sound and that the Initiative should continue. Within its framework there are some further issues that need attention.

Strategy 1: Options for older youth

After the age of 14, youth have considerable say in whether they become adopted. Many report feeling a sense of emotional security in their current setting, although most of these cannot fully anticipate what will happen at the age of 18. The current experience of youth exiting care at 18 suggests that what may seem emotionally secure now may not be in the future. The SPO Workgroup observed that policy and practice remain somewhat ambivalent about older youth in cases where no adoption option currently exists. Should the agency keep searching or accept adult transitioning as the new goal?

At the most recent Adoptions and Permanency Planning Summit participants identified a number of issues related to adoption of older children. They include:

- System/Model Issues.
- System does not promote adoption of older children - focuses on foster placement
- Lack of complete and timely assessment and re-assessment of older children
- Inadequate preparation for adoptive families and older children to accept placement (feelings of fear and ambivalence)

Educational needs:

- Judicial staff need to be informed about permanency
- General misconceptions, assumptions from child's history
- Workers need training to build skill set for working with older children

Myths and Misconceptions:

- Older children are not adoptable
- Media portrays negatives
- Older children sometimes believe there are no benefits to adoption

Financial obstacles:

- Lack of resources for recruitment, education and outreach efforts tailored for placing older children
- Financial disincentives when older children are adopted that impact children (scholarships), foster parents, and private adoption agencies

Recruitment:

- Workers and the system are resistant to public targeted recruitment of families for older children (seen as "advertising" children)
- Lack of marketing knowledge and information for successful targeted recruitment

Support:

- Lack of guaranteed post adoption services for parents and children
- Lack of appropriate preparation of families and children

Definitions:

- There is no agreement on the age at which a child is considered an "older child"
- A child is "harder to place" when they reach 10-12 years old and need to consent
- General agreement on the age at which a child becomes "harder to place" is younger than traditionally acknowledged by the system

Ultimately, as it did with kinship adoption, the answer may lie with the youth themselves. The SPO Workgroup does not believe that sufficient data exists at this time to shape policy or strategy regarding adoption options for older youth. Anecdotes abound. Reliable studies do not. While continuing to consult with youth about their needs and preferences, the Workgroup recommends additional research regarding the preferences of older youth when continued pursuit of adoption is preferable.

Strategy 2: Concurrent Planning

The child welfare system remains undecided about when concurrent planning is necessary or suggested. One state bases its application on those cases judged to be at high risk of not reunifying. Another applies the construct for all cases open for services, whether in out-of-home care or not. California requires a clear position on the use of concurrent planning. Toward this end, the SPO Workgroup recommends a special task group be developed to assess available research on concurrent planning and to make recommendations for specific practice elements.

The expectations of families in concurrent planning are different than has been the case in traditional fostering. California needs to retarget its recruitment, preparation, selection and support of foster families to match concurrent planning process. As well, the configuration of supports to concurrent planning families is expectedly different. The model of foster care needs to be adjusted to reflect these considerations.

Strategy 3: Post-Adoption Services

At the most recent Adoption and Permanency Planning Summit, participants identified a number of post-adoption service needs.

Respite services:

- SED children
- Continuum of care, from 1 hour to out-of-home care
- Residential out-of-home care

Support groups for family members (including parents, siblings):

- Single parent issues
- Gay, lesbian, and trans-gender issues
- Trans-racial issues
- Issues related to medically fragile children
- Cultural issues
- Family of origin vs. adoptee (issues related to birth children vs. adopted children)

Intensive services to prevent disruption or dissolution:

- In-home assistance
- Behavior management
- Counseling
- Shadowing for child
- Therapeutic services
- In-home mentor for the parent
- Wrap-around services
- Educational advocate / access to educational system
- Adoption competent mental health services

California requires a comprehensive model of post-adoption family needs and related services. The SPO Workgroup recommends that a specific model for post-adoption services be articulated with implications for funding, policy and practice.

Strategy 4: Guardianship

The SPO Workgroup endorses relative guardianship as a form of permanence equivalent to adoption. It does not consider non-relative guardianship in this same light. Guardianship carries no legal responsibility to support the child. While it might be presumed that relative ties provide a natural motivation to do so, the SPO Workgroup is not persuaded that the same exists for non-relative guardianships. As well, guardianship is a much easier legal status to relinquish than that of adoptive parent. Despite these reservations, the Workgroup recognizes that certain circumstances arise in which non-relative guardianship is a viable option. These circumstances require clarification.

Systemic Strategies

While addressing specific areas needing change, the SPO Workgroup also recognized certain crosscutting needs that are more systemic in nature that support successful outcomes relative to all permanency goals.

Strategy 1: Assuring sufficient competent and supported foster family resources

Perhaps the most important or immediate issue in out-of-home care is that of the availability of foster parents or foster families. Throughout the country, for various reasons, there is a limited supply of competent foster parents or even persons who are interested in considering foster parenting. For this and other reasons, such as the need of many foster children for intensive care, the strategy that we should actively consider is that of recruiting, training, supporting and adequately paying a *selected group of foster parents*. This is something that of course requires a lot of thought and planning.

Currently, compensated foster parenting is provided to a limited degree in agencies throughout the country. The SPO Workgroup suggests that it is required for many children in care. Without such help, many children who enter foster care sooner or later develop problems that require intensive treatment.

The current volunteer status for foster parents provides a dilemma for both agency and foster parents. Agencies feel constrained as to the extent of expectations they can place on the role given that it is a volunteer role. Conversely, the status of foster parents on the care team remains ambiguous due to their volunteer status. In foster family agencies and in therapeutic foster care there is often a defined structure of supervision and support for foster family providers. This is frequently not the case in families serving public child welfare agencies.

Chart 1

Birth Family Needs ↑	High	Drug Involved/ DV		Both
	Medium			
	Low	Normal		SED/Med. Fragile
		Low	Medium	High
		Child Needs →		

Chart 1 illustrates a critical change in the concept of fostering. Early conceptions of fostering focused primarily on the needs of the child. Many of the children placed in foster care fit into the lower left cell in that their daily needs were not seen as different from those of other children. Over time, children with more extensive needs entered foster care and the concept of therapeutic foster care emerged. Along with this came medically fragile children and other special needs children. Increasingly, the field has recognized a need and benefit for foster parents and other out-of-home care providers to work directly with birth families. However, the complexity of the birth parents' problems and the implied enhancements to the foster parents' tasks skills has not been recognized. The SPO Workgroup recommends that not only high needs children, but also high need birth families may justify supplements or compensation.

Compensation is a complex issue. Where foster parents represent a valid concurrent plan, compensation may complicate the emotional and practical issues. Yet CWS remains between a hard place and a rock. Fewer families can afford to withhold an income earning member from the workforce to care for the children in the public child welfare system

The SPO Workgroup recommends that CWS redesign its foster parent recruitment and support strategy with consideration of the following:

- The provision of foster care services should, in many circumstances, be a compensated role with a defined system of supervision. (This is not necessarily construed to mean an employee status with the CWS or Foster Family Agency.)
- The role should require qualifications matching the needs of children in care and contain expectations consistent with the requirements of the child welfare system as a whole.
- The supports provided in regard to training, respite, liability and resources should match the expectations of the role.

- The foster parent should have a defined role on the service team.
- In constructing a compensated role, the CWS should consider disincentives to foster parent adoption that may occur through loss of compensation.
- While a number of recruitment approaches should be maintained, a parent-to-parent strategy should be emphasized as this has proven the most effective.
- The system should maintain a number of roles for foster parents reflecting the differing needs of children and birth families.
- A common flexible framework for foster care would be adopted by all California agencies providing reunification services to maltreated children and youth.

Strategy 2: Kinship Care

Currently, more than forty percent of the children in out-of-home care in California are in some form of relative care. The expanded use of relative care has proven to have many benefits for children. Relative care placements are more stable. Children remain within their extended family system and with caregivers known to them. It is also the case that kinship care placements have approximately twice the duration of non-kinship care placements. As well, child welfare agencies struggle with the role differences inherent in kinship care.

The current kinship care system primarily adopted the same practice and policy framework as non-relative care. Federal requirements dictate that kinship families meet the same approval standards as non-relative homes. Casework practice has tended to view kinship providers in much the way it has viewed foster care providers.

However, there are significant differences. Significant elements of family history and the extended family system are at work in kinship placements. Where the foster family may be acting primarily as an agent of the child welfare agency, the kinship family is primarily operating as an agent of the family system.

The SPO Workgroup recommends that the CWS strategy in kinship care be redesigned to contain the following elements:

- Kinship caregivers would be recognized equally as a component of the family system rather solely than as a contracted agency resource.
- The design of the service plan would involve an assessment of the historical relationships of the family system and directly include kinship caregivers as an intra-familial resource for change.
- Kinship caregivers and birthparents, as members of the same family system, would jointly determine the concurrent permanency plan and goal.
- Kinship caregiver support would reflect their unique family role and be differentiated from other non-relative provider roles.

- Kinship care providers would share the executive functions of the family for the child, including right to consent to medical treatment.

Strategy 3: Disproportionality

As illustrated in Table 3 (located at the end of this document), African-American children are disproportionately represented in out-of-home care. The national evidence is inconclusive regarding disproportionality. While some point to poverty, Hispanic children are under-represented although their families are equivalently poor relative to African-American children. While reporting and entry into out of home care are higher proportionally for African-American children, The National Incidence Studies⁵ find no differences in the actual incidence of maltreatment in African-American families. In Illinois, both White and Black workers substantiate reports on African-American families at an equal and higher rate than for White families, raising question as to whether disproportionality is a race-on-race effect.

Whatever the cause, positive outcomes are less likely for African-American children entering the child welfare system. This issue deserves greater attention. The SPO Workgroup recommends two courses of action. One is increased research in California to better understand these dynamics. The second is an annual report by county of proportionality and relevant strategies to address instances where need is equivalent across races but disproportionality exists.

Strategy 4: Standardized Safety Assessment

Safety decision-making reflects one of the most critical components of the child welfare intervention. Safety decision-making begins with the referral and continues throughout case closure. The means of this assessment is not standardized across California counties. In many locations, safety assessment is designed primarily to support determination of immediate danger early in the emergency response and does not equally support decision-making throughout the life of the case. Given the critical nature of this decision, the Workgroup recommends the development of a standardized methodology for safety assessment throughout the life of the case that is equally applied in all local jurisdictions by CWS, the courts and law enforcement.

Strategy 5: Standardized Assessment Criteria

There are a number of critical decisions affecting children and their families that occur during the time children are in care. Among them are:

- Determination of the areas of needed change in parental caregiving and protection in order to permit safe reunification (includes child safety along with family behavior and capacities threatening safety)
- Identification of family protective and child development, skills, resources and capacities
- Determination of the child's specific requirements for safety within the out-of-home care setting
- Determination that the placement setting will be safe for the child

- Determination of the areas of needed change in child nurture in order to compensate for and re-mediate the effects of past maltreatment or developmental delays
- Determination of the child's physical and emotional health status and related plans
- Determination of the child's educational development and related plans
- Determination of the means to accomplish change in family behavior and capacity, and in child development
- Determination of progress relative to the above
- Determination of developmental needs and community supports necessary to assist transition from state supported care to adult independence
- Determination of a family's capability to meet a child's needs through fostering, kinship care, adoption or guardianship
- Determination of a child's needs in relationship to an out-of-home placement and possible adoption or guardianship
- Determination of the match between the child's needs and caregivers
- Determination of need for concurrent planning
- Determination of the permanency goal
- Determination of unintended undesirable consequences
- Determination of the prognosis for change

Currently, the criteria for each of these decisions and the related assessment processes supporting each decision are determined at the county level. From the perspective of a statewide program, this leads to confusion and possibly differential treatment of similar conditions. The Workgroup recommends that statewide consensus be reached regarding the core criteria to be used in making each of the preceding decisions and that consensually agreed upon criteria be standardized throughout the state.

Strategy 6: Meeting the well-being needs of all children in care

The scope of child well-being is broad. There are many domains with needs that must be met in child development. Yet the state cannot, and certain cases, should not become the primary means of meeting these needs while a child is in its custody. The SPO Workgroup considered a number of relevant domains of child well-being. Among them are:

- Physical and Emotional Safety
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Education

- Dental
- Special needs such as DD, SED, FAE
- Cognitive Development
- Family Connectedness
- Cultural Development
- Social Development
- Spiritual Development
- Recreation
- Moral Development
- Sexual Development
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning Youth Needs

The SPO Workgroup views CWS as having a direct responsibility for the role any parent might take in the following areas:

- Physical and Emotional Safety
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Education
- Dental
- Cognitive Development
- Special needs such as DD, SED, FAE
- Family Connectedness

With regard to the following areas, CWS shares a role with birth parents while the child is in out-of-home care:

- Social Development
- Spiritual Development
- Recreation
- Moral Development
- Sexual Development
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning Youth Needs

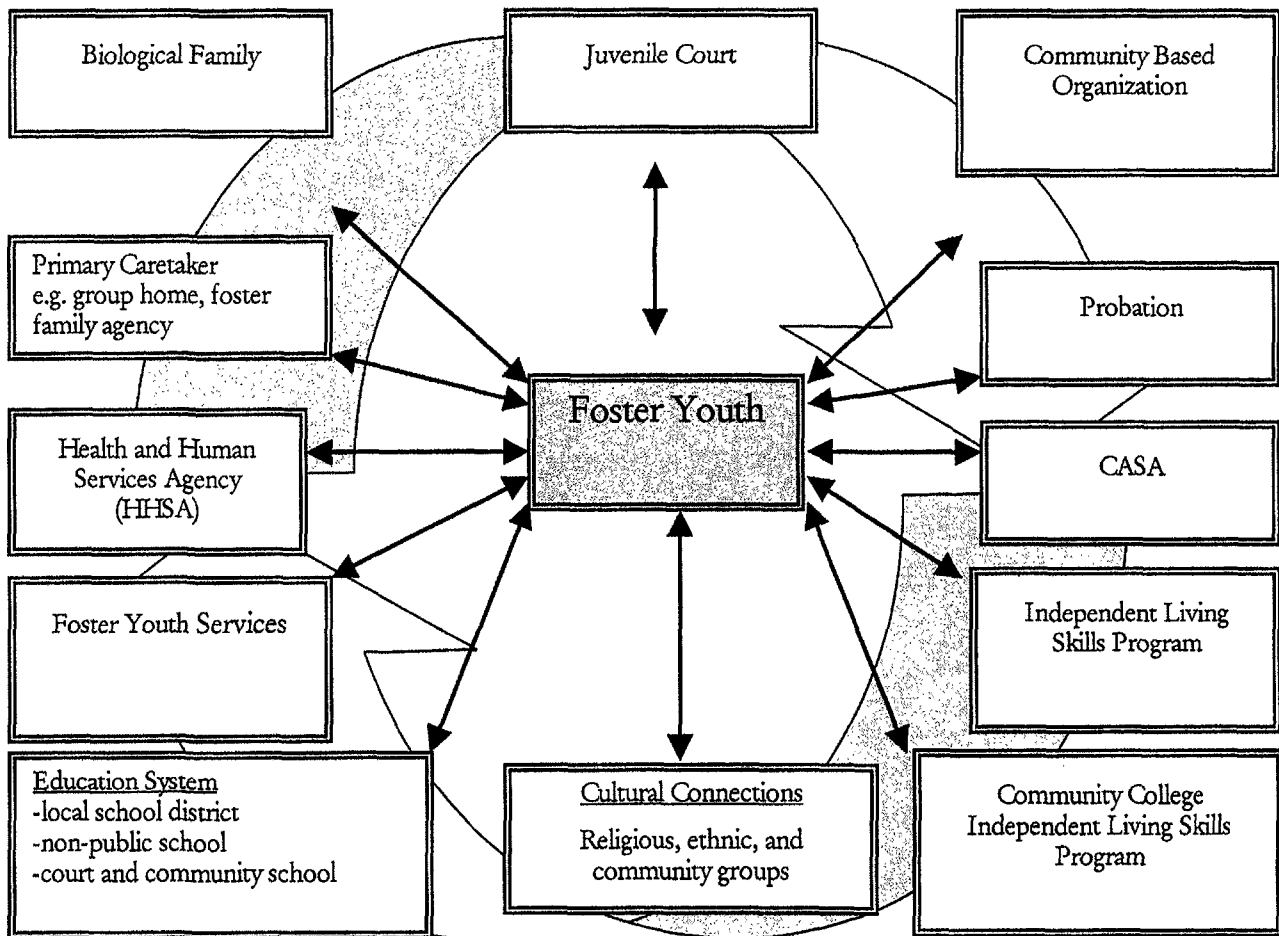
Though it is recommended now, a defined plan of care is not always constructed. Certain of the above needs are not systematically assessed. Progress is not measured, nor is remediation always offered.

To resolve this, the SPO Workgroup recommends that CWS achieve consensus regarding its responsibilities for the various domains of well-being. Following this, counties should collectively implement a standardized set of measures of current functioning for areas of direct responsibility. A component of the case plan should reflect how these needs will be met and who is responsible. Flexible, yet clear, agreements with birth parents and out-of-home caregivers should be developed regarding how the child's or youth's needs will be addressed in remaining areas.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 2

MACRO LEVEL KEY PLAYERS



SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 3

COLLABORATION: BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

Barriers	Suggested Solutions
Lack of Shared Leadership & Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Memorandum of Understanding • Meetings by upper management to address concerns/issues • Develop mission combined with goals, objectives and roles • Create interdisciplinary subgroup • Identify duties/responsibilities • Joint ownership of positive/negative actions • Cross-train on respective roles • Give credit where credit is due
Specific Mindsets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and guidelines on successful collaboration/relationship building • Share/learn the philosophies of local agencies • Educate and include court staff • Identify agency commonality to prevent duplicative efforts • Maintain awareness of barriers in order to remove • Maintain respect, communication, and sensitivity • Be open to change
Access to Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate as a collective team for funds • Utilize persons with expertise in seeking funds • Share funding information between agencies • Provide cross-training about funding processes • Provide access to program development meetings
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management approval to participate • Appropriately schedule meetings to be mindful of everyone's time • Be prepared, aware of priorities, follow protocols
Youth Not Included in Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct focus groups and ask youth what they want • Include them in every phase of the vision • Plan meetings when youth are available • Give positive feedback/encouragement • Encourage youth to advocate for themselves • Provide mentoring within/outside

List compiled at STAR 3-day trainings for front-line workers.

HANDOUT 4

Youth Development – Moving Towards STAR practices

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Living Programs are the primary teachers of life skills. Youth are sent to classes to learn skills such as money management, nutrition, household management, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Families/Caregivers and other caring adults are the best teachers of life skills. Youth must be exposed to a variety of environments. Skills are mastered by having the opportunity to “experience and do” with guidance and feedback from concerned adults.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Living Services are provided to youth 16 years of age and older. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Self-sufficiency work begins at the moment of intake. Youth of all ages can be taught the skills to live as independent adults; earlier is better.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All youth receive the same Independent Living Services. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ The youth’s self-sufficiency plan is tailored to his/her individual needs, strengths, and talents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system (i.e. social workers, the courts, foster parents) determines what services the youth is in need of receiving. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Based on individual assessment and goal planning, youth determine their needs while working closely with the caring adults in their world. As they grow, youth become increasingly more responsible for their life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster youth are fragile and need to be protected from harm, both physical and emotional. While there is some risk that youth will fail, this philosophy fosters incompetence. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ While there is some degree of risk, including the risk of failing, it is critical that the youth in out of home care have the opportunity to “try out” new skills. It is best for youth to be supported by caring adults during these times of “trial and error.” This philosophy fosters responsibility.

HANDOUT 5

**SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENTS OUTCOMES (SPO)
WORKGROUP COMPETENCIES**

It is the SPO Workgroup's intent that youth transitioning out of the foster care system will have:

1. A healthy sense of cultural and personal identity,
2. Close, positive relationships with at least one adult and community connections,
3. Access to physical and mental health services,
4. Improved life skills,
5. A high school diploma or GED,
6. Income sufficient to meet basic needs, and
7. A safe and stable living situation.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 6

SWOT ANALYSIS

What is the current reality of your county in implementing an Independent Living Program that will ensure all youth successfully transition to adulthood?

Strengths (internal)	Weaknesses (internal)
Opportunities (external)	Threats (external)

ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

HANDOUT 7

County: _____ Strategic Direction _____

Work Group Members: _____ Page# _____

ACTIVITIES	Start Date	Due Date	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	ACCOMPLISHMENT INDICATORS	PEOPLE/ RESOURCES NEEDED

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
RESOURCES

RESOURCES

In the pages that follow you will find a copy of each of the resources listed in the curriculum.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
RESOURCES

RESOURCE 1

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999

The Foster Care Independence Act was signed into law 12/14/99 (PL 106-169). The legislation, which was endorsed by the National CASA Association, expands funding to states and improves upon federal programs for youth transitioning from foster care.

The centerpiece of the legislation is the establishment of the **John H. Chafee Independent Living Program**. Senator Chafee, an outstanding champion for children and original sponsor of the bill, spearheaded the effort to win Congressional approval before adjournment last year. The Senator passed away shortly after moving the bill forward. The Chafee Program replaces Title IVE Independent Living Program. Statutory language best summarizes the purpose of the Act.

1. To identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
2. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions;
4. To provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and promotion of interactions with dedicated adults; and
5. To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Under the new Act

- Title IVE entitlement for independent living activities is doubled to \$140 million, with a 20% state match;
- Services, and room and board, can be made available to young people who left foster care because they turned 18;
- Young people with assets up to \$10,000 are still eligible for Title IV-E;
- States are able to expand Medicaid coverage for young people 18 – 21;

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS RESOURCES

- Young people must be involved in the design of their plan to achieve self-sufficiency.

States will be required to submit a five-year plan to implement the Chafee Independent Program, addressing services to foster care youth at various stages and ages. The US Department of Health and Human Services expects to release program instructions to states in late March – April on how to apply for funds. The first state application, due in late June, will require an abbreviated narrative on how the state intends to provide services to youth 18 – 21, including room and board. A more detailed application will be required by the end of 2000. The state plan should be developed with participation from representatives of public and private organizations, Indian tribes and young people served by independent living activities.

Now is the time for child advocates to work with state representatives who will be developing the state plan. States are given flexibility in designing their plan, and advocates may want to assure that the state comes up with 20% match for the funding, which can be in-kind. The extension of Medicaid, and services to youth 18 – 21 are additional areas to watch for in the state plan. Once expanded services are available, CASAs will want to assure that their children aging out of foster care access all the services for which they qualify.

A list of the state coordinators for independent living can be found at www.NRCYS.ou.edu, then click on National Resource Center for Youth Development. Full text of the Foster Care Independence Act can be found at

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/publaw/106publ.html>. Scroll down to Pub.L. 106-169 (H.R. 3443). *Frequently Asked Questions*, a thorough written review of the Act prepared by the National Foster Care Awareness Project, can be viewed online at www.connectforkids.com

This piece of National Legislation was taken from the National CASA association website at <http://www.casanet.org/reference/foster-independ.htm>.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
RESOURCES

RESOURCE 2

**SUMMARY OF CALIFORNIA'S INDEPENDENT LIVING
PROGRAM 2001-2002 ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT**

California Department of Social Services
Independent Living Program (ILP) Annual Statistical Report
Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2001 – September 30, 2002
Statewide Summary

- 33,253 youth offered ILP services
- 4,611 youth in juvenile probation
- 12,358 youth in county welfare department
- 1,430 youth received Transitional Housing Placement services
- 538 youth were appropriate for *but* denied Transitional Housing Placement services
- 4,940 youth complete high school/GED or adult education
- 1,430 youth completed vocational or on-the-job training
- 3,291 youth enrolled in college
- 446 youth enlisted in military, Job Corps, or California Conservation Corps
- 5,769 youth living independently of agency maintenance programs
- 2,625 youth for whom no information is available
- 9,852 youth no longer in foster care and receiving ILP

Web Sites: www.gao.gov foster Care Challenges in Helping Youths Live Independently and Foster Care Effectiveness of Independent Living Services Unknown. California Department of Social Services, Research Division, www.dss.ca.gov

TITLE 22 LICENSING REGULATIONS THAT CAN POSE BARRIERS TO EMANCIPATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH

87064 Licensing Duties and Responsibilities

(a) The licensee shall be regularly present in the home when children are in the home full time.

(2) Then the licensee is absent from the home while children are present, he/she shall provide for supervision by a responsible adult unless otherwise agreed to in advance by the licensing agency.

ISSUE: Youth who need to learn independent living skills and how to manage and structure their own life, activity and time need unsupervised time for foster youth, when at 18, or when they emancipate, they will be more unsupervised and responsible for their own life than most young adults. This transition is made very difficult by forcing youth to abruptly change from always being supervised to being completely alone.

(c) The licensee shall ensure supervision of children during the child's participation in or presence at potentially dangerous activities.

(1) An adult who has the ability to swim shall provide supervision at all times when children are using a pool or a body of water from which rescue requires the rescuer's ability to swim.

ISSUE: Some providers interpret this regulation to mean that foster youth who are teens can't go swimming alone. This is inappropriate for older youth.

87075 Health Related Services

(1) The licensee shall centrally store medications under the following circumstances:

(1) Any medication is determined by the physician to be hazardous if kept in the personal possession of the child for whom it was prescribed

(1) Because of physical arrangements and the condition or the habits of persons in the home, the medications are determined by either the licensee or by the licensing agency to be a safety hazard

(m) Medications shall be kept in a safe and locked place that is not accessible to persons other than those responsible for the supervision of the medication

ISSUE: Foster youth need to learn responsibility for their own health care and medication needs. If they are not given the opportunity to learn this behavior, they will not know how to meet their own health needs once they emancipate and have no one regulating their medications. Both of the conditions for medications being locked up are very subjective: almost every medication can be determined to be potentially hazardous, and any physical arrangement or habits of other youth in the home could be interpreted as a safety hazard.

87087.4 Storage Space

- (a) Medicines, disinfectants, cleaning solutions, poisons, firearms, and other dangerous items shall be stored where inaccessible to children.

ISSUE: Foster youth need to learn household cleaning and living skills, and locking up disinfectants and cleaning solutions stands in the way of learning these skills. Older youth should have access to cleaning supplies at all times, so cleaning is a regular and accessible activity. Also, many providers interpret "dangerous items" to mean objects such as kitchen knives, razors, or utensils that when locked up also pose barriers to learning and practicing independent living behavior and skills. This should be clarified.

84072.1 Discipline Policies and Procedures

- (a) Acceptable forms of discipline shall include the following:
(3) Prohibition against attendance at or participation in planned activities.

ISSUE: Many providers interpret this regulation to mean they can prohibit attendance at and participation in Independent Living Skills Program classes as a form of discipline. Attending this program is a right, rather than a privilege, of youth in foster care and this should be clarified in the regulations.

Additionally, for older youth the Needs and Services Plan should clearly state if the youth is age eligible for Independent Living Skills Program services, and how those services will be provided by the placement. Otherwise, the Licensing Program Evaluators have no way of knowing if the placement is meeting these needs. A record of all ILSP classes attended or provided in the placement should be available for review on annual visits.

84274 Transportation

- (a) Individuals who transport children shall be at least 18 years old and have a valid California driver's license.

ISSUE: This regulation can be interpreted to mean that foster youth can't ride in vehicles with their friends who drive. Also, many providers require that the friends of foster youth present and have on file their driver's license and automobile insurance information. This presents an embarrassing situation for foster youth who may sacrifice having relationships with friends to avoid having their friends go through this process.

(Completed by an alumni of foster care who is currently enrolled in law school at the University of California at Davis)

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

**INDEPENDENT LIVING
PROGRAM STANDARDS**

June 30, 2000

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gray Davis, Governor

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Grantland Johnson, Secretary

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Rita Saenz, Director

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STANDARDS

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 1111, Chapter 147, Statutes of 1999, Section 10609.4 was added to the Welfare and Institutions Code which states in part: "On or before July 1, 2000, the State Department of Social Services, in consultation with county and state representatives, foster youth, and advocates, shall . . . :

- (1) Develop statewide standards for the implementation and administration of the Independent Living Program established pursuant to the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-272)."

In response to this directive, in conjunction with the Independent Living Program (ILP) Strategic Planning Group (SPG), a committee whose members include representatives of The County Welfare Directors Association, ILP administrators, placement agencies, advocacy groups, community groups, foster youth, and Department representatives, the Department has been engaged in developing standards for the program.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (CDSS) INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

The California Department of Social Services drafted the Independent Living Program (ILP) Standards in conjunction with the ILP Strategic Planning Group (SPG), comprised of representatives of State, local, public agencies, advocacy groups and the private sector. More than 20 SPG members met over a two-year period to discuss issues and develop the ILP Standards which serve to ensure consistency in ILP's for foster youth. The Department extends appreciation to these individuals for their contribution.

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INTRODUCTION

The Independent Living Program (ILP) was designed to solve the crisis foster youth face as they age out of the foster care system. Most adults remember their last days of childhood when they peeked over the horizon at the future with excitement and trepidation. During their adolescence and teen years their parents had gradually prepared them for the transition: teaching them how to balance bank accounts, prepare resumes, keep house, pay bills and learn a variety of other adult survival skills. It seemed that these skills were learned so gradually it was almost by osmosis. Eventually, young people, secure that they can make it on their own, leave the nest. Unfortunately, most foster care youth don't have the same opportunities.

When foster youth reach their late teens, they are terminated from the foster care system with little experience, guidance, or financial support. On February 9, 2000 a study by the Orange County Grand Jury regarding the outcomes of emancipated foster care youth presented some startling findings. The study indicates that within the first 12 to 18 months of discharge from foster care 50 percent of emancipated Orange County foster youth were unemployed and have experienced homelessness, 37 percent had not finished high school, 27 percent of the males and 10 percent of the females had been incarcerated, and 33 percent were receiving some form of public assistance. It seems evident that parental support and assistance in the child-to-adulthood process was not a part of foster youth lives and the skills necessary to thrive in the adult world were not learned.

HISTORY

To address the problems foster youth are having in their journey towards self-sufficiency, in 1986, Congress enacted The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (P.L. 96-272) which added Section 477 to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. This addition authorized funds to states to design and implement programs which will "assist children with respect to whom foster care maintenance payments are being made by the State" make the transition to adulthood.

In 1987 Arizona, Colorado, Georgia and Virginia provided data regarding their federal demonstration grant independent living programs. The positive outcomes of the youth who participated in the programs highlighted the tremendous impact these activities and services had on participants.

In 1992, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66) permanently reauthorized ILP. On December 14, 1999, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-169) was enacted into law. This act provides more funding and greater flexibility in carrying out ILPs including allowing up to 30 percent of the funds to be used for room and board

for emancipated foster youth up to age 21 and requires that services be expanded to include 18 - 20 year olds.

CALIFORNIA'S ILP

California has been actively involved with the program since 1987. In April of that year, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) applied for California's share of the \$45 million federal ILP grant to states and received a grant of \$8,023,999. The Department contracted with the California Community College Foundation (CCCCF) to train foster parents and group home staff to teach independent living skills. The following year, county welfare directors and managers were invited to attend ILP planning and training sessions. Later that year the first set of ILP guidelines was distributed.

In 1992 the California Youth Connection, an organization of foster youth, held its first conference. This organization has been instrumental in building public awareness of many foster youth issues.

In 1998, SB 933 added subsection (d) to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10609. 3. In accordance with subsection (d), the Department was required to amend its IV-B and IV-E State Plans to allow ILP services to youth up to age 21.

California's ILP is a curriculum of services, training classes or activities offered to foster care youth by providers, counties, or community colleges. Foster youth participation is voluntary. The county welfare departments provide ILP core services including: training on occupational and college preparatory high school classes; educational and vocational alternatives information; information about financial aid and scholarships; tutoring services; information regarding laws related to educational requirements for minors, assistance in acquiring a social security card; medical history information; a listing of foster care placements, references, and a birth certificate. Also, ILP participants receive a comprehensive listing of community resources geared to the needs of young people, and a broad array of life-skill classes and activities including cooking, money management, shopping, interpersonal relations, job search methods, and first aid.

Counties have the option of providing these services directly, or contracting for the provision of services. Some counties also continue to provide a variety of optional services. County ILP coordinators collaborate with other agencies and individuals to offer more optional services and activities. These coordinated efforts promote workshops on health issues, parenting training, legal rights, career goals, educational goals, personal safety, car buying techniques, employment techniques, housing and roommate issues, and

relationships. Various other workshops are provided to youth as their needs within the community are identified.

The CCCF, besides making specialized training available through the colleges to foster parents, relative care providers, social workers, group home staff, foster family agency staff, and other foster care providers, offers classes and services directly to foster youth. During federal fiscal year (FFY) 1998, CCCF trained 4,298 foster youth and 2,148 adult care providers, a 39 percent participation increase over the previous FFY.

The number of youth receiving ILP services increases each year. During FFY 1993-1994, 7,819 foster youth received ILP services. Over the years the number of participants has more than doubled. In fact, in the 1998/1999 fiscal year, according to California's ILP Annual Year End Report for Fiscal Year 1998/99, 16,519 youth received services. As the California ILP has grown, outcomes have indicated that foster youth who have participated in ILP have fared better in the adult world than have foster youth without the ILP experience. The experience of program administrators and the youth themselves have exposed those areas of the program which are very beneficial as well as areas, which need improvement. It was in response to this growing knowledge of the potential benefits of ILP that statewide ILP standards were mandated.

The ILP Strategic Planning Group (SPG) has been very mindful of the needs of emancipating foster youth and has structured the standards to address the issues facing emancipating foster youth. The committee has met quarterly for the last two years and sub-committees also meet regularly. Through numerous discussions SPG realized that four main issues must be stressed in the ILP standards: statewide consistency of services and activities, broadening of the learning areas to meet the needs of the youth, housing, and an aggressive outreach program.

The Department is confident that these standards provide a solid foundation for ILP. The standards allow for maximum county flexibility, while ensuring that the skills and services so sorely needed by California foster youth will be provided uniformly throughout the State and within the reach of all our foster youth.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (CDSS)

STATEWIDE STANDARDS FOR THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

Foster youth, should be given every opportunity to succeed as they enter adulthood. However, historically, they have encountered major difficulties. The State of California is dedicated to using its best efforts to assist these youth in meeting their highest potential so that they may become successful, gainfully employed, contributors to society.

GOAL

The goal of the State of California is to provide foster youth with all of the necessary skills and support to attain self-sufficiency. The Statewide Standards for the Independent Living Program (ILP) have been developed to ensure the needs of foster youth are being met. Services and activities of the ILP are designed to provide all eligible current and emancipated foster youth age 16 to 21, with the appropriate assistance to facilitate a more successful transition to self-sufficiency. Service goals of the ILP shall focus on the educational and experiential learning needed to function as healthy, productive and responsible self-sufficient adults. County agencies have the flexibility of implementing their own program, contracting all or parts of the program, or participating in a regional consortium which ensures that all of the core services are available to all youth regardless of where they are placed.

OUTCOMES

At a minimum, the outcome measures must include measures of:

- Educational attainment (such as high school diploma) or trade school certificate)
- Employment
- Self sufficiency
- Adequate housing
- Parental status
- Law abiding
- Abstinence, safe sex and drug free

OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

The State of California will use all relevant available data to determine the number of foster youth enrolled in ILP activities, the type of services provided, and if the service resulted in the desired program outcomes. Foster youth who have completed the ILP will be tracked to determine their educational, employment and housing success, parental status, and whether they have become incarcerated.

ELIGIBILITY

The current definition of eligible participants for ILP services is:

- 1) All youth age 16 and over for whom foster care maintenance payments are being made under Title IV-E.
- 2) Any other youth age 16 and over who are in foster care under the responsibility of the state (non-IV-E).
- 3) Eligible youth residing in kinship care who are in receipt of family reunification and/or permanent placement services.
- 4) All former foster youth who were in foster care after the age of 16. Youth are eligible for ILP services up to age 21.

The phrase "in foster care" means any child on whose behalf a state or federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) payment is being made and/or who is receiving Family Reunification or Permanent Placement services.

Wards of guardians and probation youth age 16 and older who are in foster care and on whose behalf a state or federal AFDC-FC payment is being made and/or who is receiving Family Reunification or Permanent Placement services are eligible for ILP services.

The low-end age limit is subject to change when the requirements of the Foster Care Independence Act are met.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES

To reach the goal of guiding California's foster youth to successful emancipation ten objectives have been identified.

I. CORE SERVICES OBJECTIVE

To achieve the program outcomes a set of core services must be available to eligible youth. Youth will be given the opportunity to participate in an array of learning experiences that will give them the skills to emancipate successfully.

Standard

Services, activities and assistance in each county must include but not be limited to: interactive transitional independent living plans (TILP); assistance in obtaining a high school diploma and pursuing post-secondary education; career exploration, employment development, computer literacy, vocational training, job placement and retention; daily living skills, including financial management and budgeting, consumer and resource use, self-development skills and survival skills; preventive health and safety activities, including substance abuse, pregnancy prevention, nutrition and smoking; personal and emotional support through counseling and mentors, and transitional housing experiences, including Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) and household management training. Financial assistance offered to program participants must be need-based, reasonable and equitable, and includes incentives, stipends, educational/vocational tuition and other educational expenses, and start-up housing assistance.

II. EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

Participating youth shall have obtained educational success and career preparedness at the same ratio as all California youth in the same age group

Standard

Prior to exiting foster care and by age 19, but no later than age 21, participating youth shall be provided learning and educational support opportunities that lead toward obtaining a high school diploma or educational equivalency, commensurate with their individual learning capacity. Participating youth that do not obtain a high school diploma or educational equivalency shall be offered and encouraged to participate in educational, vocational or other accredited training that leads to post-emancipation employment stability. Youth will be encouraged to complete post-secondary education and/or vocational training.

III. RESOURCES FOR ALL ELIGIBLE YOUTH OBJECTIVE

Current and emancipated youth will have access to the documents, resources and information they need for successful independence.

Standard

Youth who are participating in the ILP or who have emancipated from foster care will be provided with the documents necessary to conduct adult business and personal affairs. Emancipating participants shall be provided with all personal, medical, and other vital documents as indicated on, but not limited to the TILP. Information shall also be provided regarding resources available on vocational choices, the community college and four-year college systems; information related to ILP Resource Centers; and the availability of aftercare services.

IV. ACCESS TO CORE SERVICES OBJECTIVE

To meet the needs of eligible foster youth, access to ILP core services will be consistent and available to them wherever they live in the state.

Standard

With the assistance of county agencies, the Department shall coordinate a statewide support system that ensures eligible youth have access to services. When youth are placed out-of-county, county placing agencies are responsible for ensuring that ILP core services are made available. All care providers shall be held accountable for providing transitional living experiences in partnership with county agencies and encouraging youth to maintain savings accounts in accordance with state and federal regulations.

V. OUTREACH OBJECTIVE

Eligible youth shall be provided with information regarding what services are available to them, where they are located, and how they can be accessed.

Standard

The Department and county agencies are responsible for developing and implementing an outreach program to recruit all eligible youth for participation in ILP, the THPP, aftercare programs, and for making the public aware of the value of these programs

VI. HOUSING OBJECTIVE

Eligible foster youth will participate in the THPP, if available, or alternative transitional living experiences.

Standard

Participating youth will be provided the opportunity to learn and practice self-sufficiency skills. If consistent with the case plan, all foster youth eligible and appropriate for THPP, shall be referred to THPP, if available, or to alternative transitional living experiences that meet Community Care Licensing requirements. The Department will provide assistance to county agencies in the development of THPPs.

VII. AFTERCARE SERVICES OBJECTIVE

To assist eligible foster youth who have emancipated from foster care in the transition to self-sufficiency an array of services will be provided.

Standard

Youth up to age 21 and who emancipated from foster care will be provided aftercare services that include educational, vocational, career, counseling, employment, legal and housing assistance.

VIII. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE

All efforts must be made to involve ILP youth in the development of their individual TILP and the fulfillment of its goals.

Standard

Assessments will be monitored and documented in the case plan. Program participants aged 18 and under will be individually assessed every six months after entry into ILP. All ILP participants will be actively involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of their TILP.

IX. COLLABORATION OBJECTIVE

The collaboration of various State, public and private agencies will ensure that the needs of foster youth are met.

Standard

All public and private agencies providing services to eligible youth will be proactively engaged in helping those youth achieve TILP goals. State and county agencies will establish links with other entities including, but not limited to: departments of education, mental health, health services, community services organizations, and private business and industries.

X. REPORTING DATA OBJECTIVE

To ensure that the needs of foster youth are being met, accurate, relevant data will be entered by the counties and compiled by the state.

Standard

County agencies shall collect and report client data and program activities and costs to the Department for such reports as are deemed necessary. The State will provide and maintain a data collection system. The system should record all data necessary to measure accurately the outcomes of the program. These reports will confirm that expenditures were specific to the purposes of ILP and met federal and state requirements against fraud and abuse.

Living Program administrators, placement agencies, providers, advocacy groups, and community groups, a comprehensive evaluation of the Independent Living Program established pursuant to the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-272) and develop recommendations available to the public on how independent living services could better prepare foster youth for independence and adulthood.

(b) The department shall investigate alternative transition housing models for youth between the ages of 17 and 18 who are in out-of-home placements under the supervision of the county department of social services or county probation department. To the extent federal funds are available and it is in the best interests of the children, the department shall develop and implement a transitional housing model for youth who are preparing for emancipation from foster care.

(c) The department shall also investigate alternative transition models for youth discharged from foster care to live on their own. As part of this investigation, the department shall consider the needs of youth for housing, transportation, health care, access to community resources, employment, and other support services.

(d) The department shall, with the approval of the federal government, amend the foster care state plan, provided for pursuant to Subtitle IV-E (commencing with Section 470) of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 670, et seq.), and the child welfare services state plan (42 U.S.C. Sec. 622), to permit all eligible children be served by the Independent Living Program up to the age of 21 years.

(e) (1) Effective July 1, 2000, the department, in consultation with the Independent Living Program Strategic Planning Committee, shall develop and implement a stipend to supplement and not supplant the Independent Living Program. To qualify for this stipend, a youth shall be otherwise eligible for the Independent Living Program, have been emancipated from foster care to live on his or her own, and be approved by the county. The stipend may provide for, but not be limited to, assisting the youth with the following independent living needs:

- (A) Bus passes.
- (B) Housing rental deposits and fees.
- (C) Housing utility deposits and fees.
- (D) Work-related equipment and supplies.
- (E) Training-related equipment and supplies.
- (F) Education-related equipment and supplies.

(2) Notwithstanding Section 10101, the state shall pay 100 percent of the nonfederal costs associated with the stipend program in paragraph (1), subject to the availability of funding provided in the annual Budget Act.

10609.4. (a) On or before July 1, 2000, the State Department of Social Services, in consultation with county and state representatives, foster youth, and advocates, shall do both of the following:

(1) Develop statewide standards for the implementation and administration of the Independent Living Program established pursuant to the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-272).

(2) Define the outcomes for the Independent Living Program and the characteristics of foster youth enrolled in the program for data collection purposes.

(b) Each county department of social services shall include in its annual Independent Living Program report both of the following:

(1) An accounting of federal and state funds allocated for implementation of the program. Expenditures shall be related to the specific purposes of the program. Program purposes may include, but

are not limited to, all of the following:

- (A) Enabling participants to seek a high school diploma or its equivalent or to take part in appropriate vocational training, and providing job readiness training and placement services, or building work experience and marketable skills, or both.
 - (B) Providing training in daily living skills, budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, and career planning.
 - (C) Providing for individual and group counseling.
 - (D) Integrating and coordinating services otherwise available to participants.
 - (E) Providing each participant with a written transitional independent living plan that will be based on an assessment of his or her needs and that will be incorporated into his or her case plan.
 - (F) Providing participants with other services and assistance designed to improve independent living.
- (2) A detail of the characteristics of foster youth enrolled in their independent living programs and the outcomes achieved based on the information developed by the department pursuant to subdivision (a).
- (c) In consultation with the department, a county may use different methods and strategies to achieve the standards and outcomes of the Independent Living Program developed pursuant to subdivision (a).

10609.5. (a) The department shall contract with an appropriate and qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of the current child welfare services budgeting methodology and make recommendations for revising the budgeting methodology, including appropriate caseload levels, supportive services, and preventative services, in order to accurately and adequately fund the system. This evaluation shall, at a minimum, consider the impact of the following factors on the budgeting methodology:

- (1) The current state and federal statutory and regulatory environment for child welfare services.
- (2) The state of the art advancements and best child welfare practice, such as family conferencing and wraparound services.
- (3) The impact of the child welfare services case management system on the workload of workers in the system.
- (4) The nature and degree of the problems experienced by families in need of child welfare services, and the service needs of abused and neglected children and their families.
- (5) The impact on workload of obtaining timely medical, mental health, educational, and developmental assessments of children in the child welfare system, and coordinating with other systems to meet the children's needs.

(b) The department shall convene an advisory group that shall include representatives of the County Welfare Directors Association, the California State Association of Counties, child welfare services consumers, children's advocacy organizations, and child welfare social worker organizations. The advisory group shall do both of the following:

- (1) Provide oversight over the process of selecting an entity to conduct an evaluation under subdivision (a).
- (2) Provide oversight over, and technical assistance to, the entity selected to conduct the evaluation under subdivision (a).

10609.6. (a) The department, in consultation with the seven member task force specified in subdivision (b), shall develop a plan to implement the recommendations of the evaluation required by Section 10609.5.

Successful Collaboration

1. Youth desire a system with the following attributes:

- f) Provides quick and efficient response
- g) Personalized services
- h) Treated with respect/listened to
- i) Builds on their strengths
- j) They can access consultation on life decisions (Jones, et al., 1999).

2. Collaboration Competencies:

- f) Allowing for a healthy sense of self
- g) Sustaining effective relationships
- h) Working successfully in groups
- i) Navigating through organizations
- j) Addressing regional and national issues (Jones, et al., 1999).

Collaboration is an essential part of the 'equation' in our work to prepare foster adolescents for adulthood. As stated in *Promising Practices: Supporting Transition of Youth Served by the Foster Care System* (Sheehy et.al., 2001):

- a) Collaborations with community organizations can lead to job shadowing experiences, mentoring opportunities, and long-term personal connections.
- b) Programs that promote community interactions and interagency collaboration are modeling for the youth the importance of networking and community support systems.

In fact, in a comprehensive evaluation of youth programs, the American Youth Policy Forum found that unsuccessful programs are generally the ones that only provide a single focus for intervention rather than addressing all the dimensions of the youth's developmental needs (Sheehy, et al., 2001).

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS RESOURCES

3. Barriers to Collaboration

a) Attitude Challenges: I can't collaborate because...

Territorialism Ego-centered	<i>This is My Turf.</i>	Protection over work/ domain/ skills/ profession/ information
Ambivalent Commitment	<i>Do I really care?</i>	Not fully invested. Reluctant to give it a try.
Apathy	<i>Nothing will happen with this anyway.</i>	Pessimistic. Shows no initiative. Burned out.
Not a Team Player	<i>I like to work alone. I get more done.</i>	Works well independently. Successful at independently making decisions.
Too Narrow Focus or Too Rigid	<i>It's not in the procedures.</i>	Too narrow or too rigid focus demonstrated. Resistant to diversity, new ideas. Closed to new options. Problem solving limited.

b) Structural: I can't collaborate because...

Time	<i>I don't have time.</i>	Schedule conflicts with time needed for collaboration.
Priorities	<i>It's not my job.</i>	Higher or conflicting priorities.
Confidentiality	<i>I can't share that information.</i>	Poor knowledge of confidentiality and information access. Delay in gaining or sharing information.
Funding	<i>I won't be here anyway.</i>	Distracted by future real or potential funding concerns.
Confusion	<i>I don't know what to do</i>	Task direction and role boundaries unclear. Information vague.

(Jones, et al., 1999).

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
RESOURCES

4. Steps Toward Collaboration

a) Attitude Challenges: I can collaborate because...

<i>I can learn something interesting about you.</i>	Consider everyone a learner and maintain curiosity. Help others understand you.
<i>I want to be a part of making this happen.</i>	Clarify your own values. Identify links between personal values and work projects. If there is a clash, consult with a peer or supervisor. Assess if another colleague might be a better participant.
<i>I need five minutes of venting time.</i>	Make venting time or writing time for yourself. Make it brief, time limited. Share with others but do not let it infect the team.
<i>I can help lead my group.</i>	Write down your fears and concerns working in a team. Get a team player mentor. Read about team leadership. Inspire yourself.
<i>I can learn to be more successful.</i>	Investigate successful collaboration efforts. Learn how rules were addressed. Pause when you have a problem. Practice being more open-minded.

b) Structural: I can collaborate because...

<i>Let's make a standing meeting.</i>	Schedule meetings to work with your schedule. Evaluate if some communication can occur through other methods: telephone, e-mail, letter.
<i>Supervisor or team member, what is more important here?</i>	Clarify priorities with management. Ask for their help in prioritizing. Range level of involvement in project. Gain additional support.
<i>I think I'll get familiar with our confidentiality process and procedures.</i>	Stay current with agency confidentiality, information access, and legislation.
<i>Let me see the budget.</i>	Encourage clear communication on funding.
<i>Please tell me (supervisor or team) your expectations for this group.</i>	Develop guidelines in writing. Consult with supervisor or others for problem solving.

(Jones, et al., 1999).

*SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
RESOURCES*

2. Successful Collaborative Teams/ Lessons Learned:

- a) It is challenging and sometimes frightening to share responsibility and accountability when working collaboratively with families. Embrace the word "we" quickly and use problems as a learning experience.
- b) Shared vision and core values among the collaborative team is essential. Define what you have in common.
- c) Collaboration is relationship-building with families, agencies, community residents.
 - ☆ Must develop TRUST, PATIENCE, and RESPECT
- d) Focus on the "PRIZE": better outcomes for youth, families and communities.
- e) Collaborative Teams must formulate common goals in partnership with families.
- f) Learn a "common language"... one families understand.
- g) Leave titles and "egos" at the door.
- h) Understand: There is more than one best way.
- i) Connect to community-building activities.
- j) Must engage the whole family and focus on growth.
- k) Confidentiality can be a help, not a hindrance.

(Jones, et al., 1999).

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
RESOURCES

RESOURCE 6

CALIFORNIA YOUTH CONNECTION

California Youth Connection
604 Mission Street, 9th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone:(415) 442-5060
Fax:(415) 442-0720
e-mail:cjknipe@calyouthconn.org

WHO WE ARE:

California Youth Connection is an advocacy/youth leadership organization for current and former foster youth. We are young people, who because of our experiences with the child welfare system, now work to improve foster care, to educate the public and policy makers about our unique needs and to change the negative stereotypes many people have of us.

- There are now 22 active chapters of CYC in California with over 250 members, ages 14 to 24.
- CYC is a youth-run organization that provides invaluable opportunities to learn leadership skills.
- CYC youth put on two statewide conferences per year to discuss state level legislative and local issues we want to work on; we also organize a Day at the Capitol to educate legislators about foster care issues.

WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED:

CYC has initiated legislation and policy decisions that facilitate youth's emancipation process, specifically:

- Waiver of the \$1000 limit on savings for foster youth preparing to emancipate.
- Development of transitional housing pilot programs.
- Removal of barriers to obtaining driver's licenses for foster youth.
- Participated in a coalition to influence and support the passage of H.R. 3443 The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.
- January 21, 1999 CYC became a nonprofit organization.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS RESOURCES

WHO WE HAVE TALKED TO AND EDUCATED:

- Hillary Rodham Clinton
- California State Legislature
- California Members of Congress and Senators
- California Department of Social Services
- County Welfare Directors
- Juvenile Court Judges of California
- Child Welfare League of America
- National Resource Center for Youth Services
- California Association of Children's Homes

WHY CYC IS IMPORTANT:

CYC gives us a voice to speak about foster care. No one can be clearer or more articulate about how the foster care system has worked for--or against--us. When we tell our stories, people listen.

CALIFORNIA YOUTH CONNECTION CHAPTERS

Following is a list of existing CYC chapters. If you want to get involved in CYC in your county, call the CYC Statewide Office at (415) 398-1063 ext. 44. Counties in *italics* are currently inactive. If your county is not listed or is currently inactive, you can help to start a chapter in your area. **Just call us!**

Alameda	San Diego
Butte	San Francisco
Contra Costa	San Joaquin
Fresno	<i>San Luis Obispo</i>
Glenn	Santa Clara
<i>Humboldt</i>	Santa Cruz
<i>Kern</i>	Shasta
Los Angeles	Siskiyou
Mendocino	Stanislaus
Merced	Tehama
Nevada/Placer	<i>Ventura</i>
Orange	
Riverside	
Sacramento	
COUNTIES INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING CHAPTERS:	
Santa Cruz, San Benito and Yolo	

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
POSTERS

POSTERS



PROTECTING VS. RAISING YOUTH

THE OLD WAY: PROTECTING YOUTH	STAR PRACTICE: RAISING YOUTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Living Programs are the primary teachers of life skills. • Independent Living Services are provided to youth 16 years of age and older. • All youth receive the same Independent Living Services. • The system (i.e. social workers, the courts, foster parents) determines what services the youth is in need of receiving. • Foster youth are fragile and need to be protected from harm, both physical and emotional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Families/Caregivers and other caring adults are the best teachers of life skills. ☆ Self-sufficiency work begins at the moment of intake. ☆ The youth's self-sufficiency plan is tailored to his/her individual needs, strengths, and talents. ☆ Based on individual assessment and goal planning, youth determine their needs while working closely with caring adults. ☆ While there is some degree of risk, including the risk of failing, it is critical that the youth in out-of-home care have the opportunity to "try out" new skills.

THEMES AND VALUES

1. Preparing youth for a successful transition to adulthood begins at the moment the youth enters foster care.
2. Collaboration among all care providers is a crucial factor to successful youth emancipation.
3. Building self-esteem contributes to the youth's successful functioning as an adult.
4. Having at least 1 stable person to relate to assists with successful transitioning to adult life.
5. The workers' cultural competence greatly enhances cultural identity and self esteem on the part of the youth.
6. Youth need support in learning how to access and utilize educational opportunities.
7. Youth need support in the development of skills necessary for successful employment.
8. For successful transitioning of youth from the foster care system, it is important that care providers:
 - a) Commit to being aware of and assist youth in developing skills needed for successful adult living.
 - b) Understand and support the practice shift from "protecting" youth to "raising and protecting" youth.
 - c) Encourage youth to develop a sense of internal empowerment.

KEY DRIVING THOUGHTS

**We want our youth to grow up
to be healthy, competent,
responsible adults.**

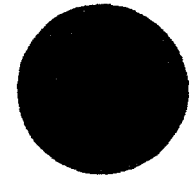
**We want our decisions to help
youth learn about the world.**

**We want what we teach to help
them succeed in the world.**

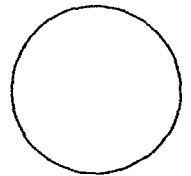
**We want to make decisions
that change youth outcomes.**

Interdisciplinary Team Composition

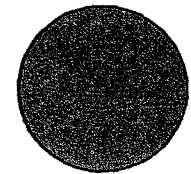
County Social Services Staff (CPS, County Social Workers, County ILS) (Blue)



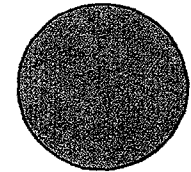
Other Government Funded Personnel (Probation, Schools, Universities, Juvenile Court) (Yellow)



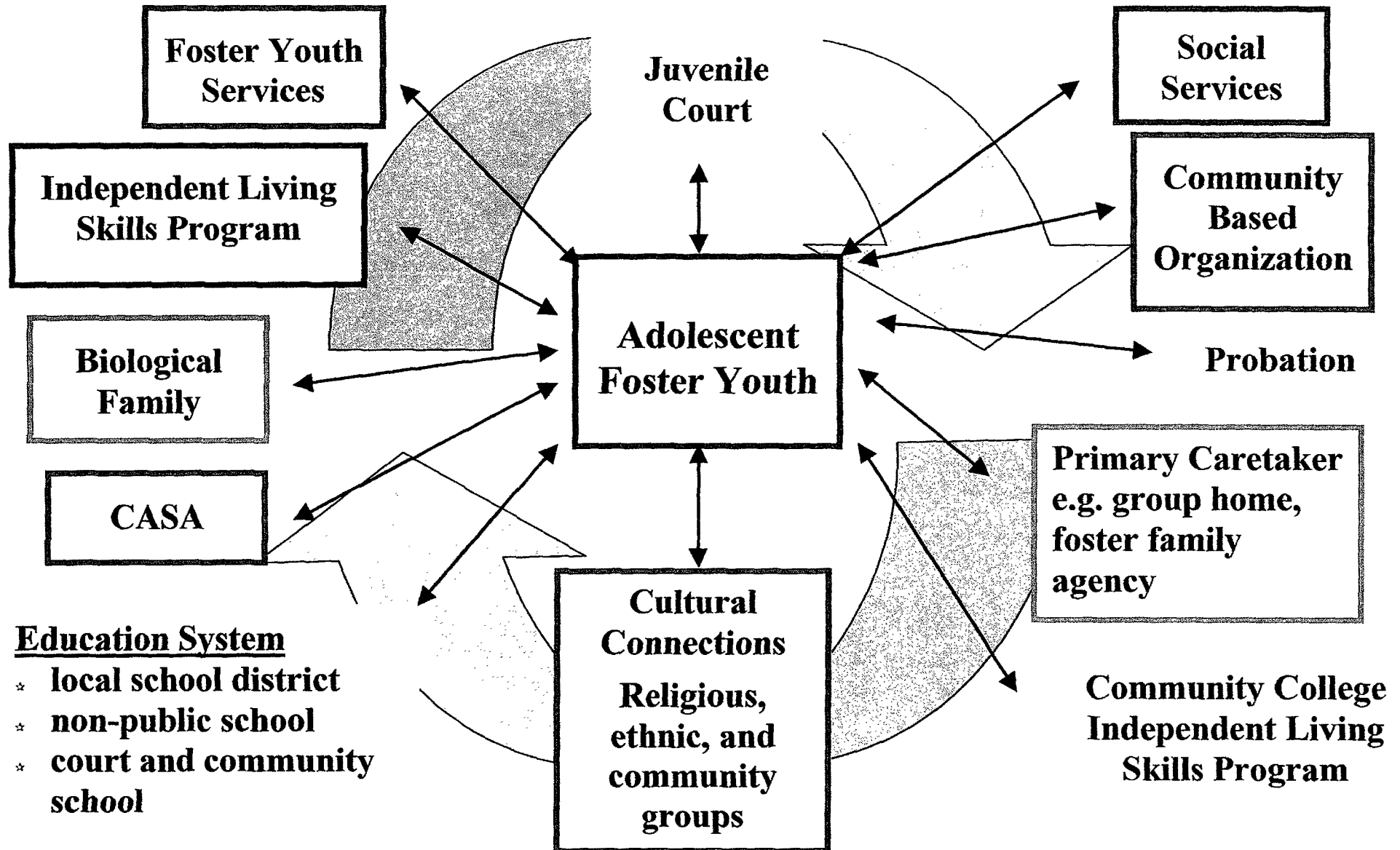
Youth Serving Organizations (YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, CBO's, CASA, Foster Youth Services, Churches) (Red)



Home Provider (Foster Parents, Kinship Care, Group Home Staff) (Green)



MACRO LEVEL KEY PLAYERS



SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ADULT READINESS
(STAR)